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JOHN KNOX

AGENTS IN AMERICA
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
64 & 66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

JOHN KNOX

A CRITICISM AND AN APPRECIATION

BY

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MINISTER OF OLD GREYFRIARS, EDINBURGH

LONDON

ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1905

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PREFACE

THIS little book had a modest origin. I promised to give a lecture on Knox, and the subject interested me. I read the best works available in connection with it, and more particularly the writings of Knox himself as given in the excellent edition of Dr. David Laing. I felt no temptation, however, to compose another life of the Great Reformer; but I soon found it impossible, in spite of all my efforts at compression, to confine myself to the limitations of a lecture. This accounts for the concentrated character of my narrative.

I have simply taken the story as told by others, but specially by Knox himself, and dealt with the salient points in it. I have endeavoured as far as possible to

John Knox

represent the man in relation to his environment ; and, while confessing that to some extent he was the creature of circumstances, to describe him as a powerful personality who exercised a vital and beneficent influence on his age. It is well that we should remember the fourth centenary of his birth, but not so well if we suppose that Knox, with his intellectual vigour and popular sympathies, should be identified with the ideas of the sixteenth century. He was a reformer then, and we are entitled to believe that he would be a reformer now. Protestantism has always stood for progress, and I regard Knox, with all his defects, as one of its most earnest and strenuous champions. Those with the welfare of the world at heart must honour such men. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament ; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. xii. 3).

J. G.

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JOHN KNOX

A CRITICISM AND AN APPRECIATION

CHAPTER I

CHURCH AND STATE IN SCOTLAND BEFORE THE REFORMATION

I SYMPATHISE with the popular verdict about Knox. He belongs not only to the spiritual peerage of Scotland, but stands in its front rank. His father was a humble vassal on the Bothwell estate, living at Morham, near Haddington. There was thus a close similarity in social position between Luther and Knox—the one the son of a miner, the other the son of a crofter—but they were even more akin in character, for both were of the heroic type, courageous in action and sagacious in counsel, with pardonable tendencies to

John Knox

fanaticism, tempered by the saving grace of humour.

X The Reformation had long been in progress before Knox appeared on the scene, and although he did almost nothing to precipitate it, he played a great part in connection with it. He was the man of the hour, with all its aspirations and all its defects—a vigorous embodiment of the popular conscience.

St. Peter has asked, "Who is he that can harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" The Church of which he is supposed to have been the first bishop might well have taken the question to herself. Romanism had become impossible in Scotland. It was not that people were revolted at her superstitions. A few were, but the multitude is seldom moved through the intellect. It was rather on account of her practice than her doctrine that she had lost the respect of the community, while many of the nobles,

Corruption of the Church

covetous of her wealth, found their opportunity in her unpopularity. "There can be no question," writes Mr. William Law Mathieson,¹ "that the Roman Church in Scotland fell rather from internal weakness than from the assaults of heresy." The Churches were deserted. The clergy were generally ignorant. Even the prelates for the most part were unable to instruct the people. It was for this reason that Archbishop Hamilton prepared his catechism. It was in the vernacular, yet "the clergy were enjoined to exercise themselves daily in reading it, lest their stammering or breaking down might move the jeers of the people." Ordination was not considered an essential qualification for an office, and so benefices were held not only by laymen, but by children. "It is," writes Joseph Robertson,² "acknowledged and bewailed with grief and indignation by the

¹ *Politics and Religion in Scotland*, i. 19.

² Quoted from Dr. D. Hay Fleming's *The Scottish Reformation*, p. 8.

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best champions of the Church in her conflict with the Reformers that rich livings, with the care of thousands of souls, were held by boys, by infants even, by men deformed in body, imbecile in mind, hardened in ignorance, old in wickedness and vice." Their conduct was scandalous. One hears about the celibacy of the clergy, but in Scotland it only led to concubinage or worse among the priests. Their "profane lewdness of life" is acknowledged by a provincial council (1549). "Many of the bishops," according to Mr. Mathieson,¹ "were audaciously profligate. Cardinal Beaton is supposed to have had nine children, and Bishop Hepburn of Moray, who survived the Reformation, had undoubtedly ten, all by different mothers." Such men outraged the ordinary sense of decency, but they also gave special offence to the nobles by using the vast wealth of the Church to enrich their sons and

¹ *Politics and Religion in Scotland*, i. 23.

Influence of England

dower their daughters. The ecclesiastical property of Scotland amounted to one-half of its whole wealth. It was divided into temporality and spirituality, the one consisting of lands and houses, the other derived from teinds and Church dues. The monks for ninety years (1473, James III.) had lost the power of election, so that the abbots were all appointed by the Court. The monasteries were thus secularised and demoralised. To the temptations of avarice were added the intrigues of politics. There had for long been a French and an English party in the country, and the latter had done much to alienate sympathy by its hectoring manner. It was a great blessing to both countries when the two Crowns were united, and yet the wooing of Henry VIII., by fire and sword, was not fitted to conciliate the people. The Reformation in England still further complicated the situation, but it ultimately compelled the two parties to arrange themselves as Pro-

John Knox

testants or Romanists. Many of the nobles were much more influenced by political than by religious considerations. There is not an ideal character among them, for even the "guid Lord James" played a very dubious part in relation to Queen Mary. Knox found his most loyal supporters among the citizens, and they could not always be relied on.

"Writers of a certain school have," to again quote from Mr. Mathieson,¹ "sought to minimise the importance of aristocratic avarice as a factor in the Reformation ; but in point of fact there are few revolutions recorded in history where the presence of self-regarding motives is so exceedingly obvious. . . . Had the Roman Church succeeded in reforming itself, as it strove to do, all the abuses on which the aristocracy had flourished for nearly a century would have been swept away. There would have been no more com-

¹ *Politics and Religion in Scotland*, i. 29.

Selfishness of Nobles

mendators, no more convents secured through child-abbots to rapacious parents, no more fortunes to be won with the daughters of the episcopate. The nobles were the only section of the community which gained anything by the continuance of the old system, and they might hope to gain more by the overthrow of the Church and the confiscation of ecclesiastical property ; but the thing which was most of all opposed to their interests was the restoration of the Church in its original purity." The lesson is obvious. A Church that conforms to the world will be destroyed by the world. A provincial council held on the eve of the Reformation (1559) adopted some excellent proposals, but Leslie assures us that many young abbots and priors went over on this account to the Protestants, "fearing themselves to be put at, according to the laws and statutes." The Church, through this selfish and secularising policy of the nobles, had made itself odious

John Knox

to the people. It was extortionate and rapacious. "The clergy," writes Mr. Mathieson,¹ "had once been the most indulgent of landlords; but now the strange spectacle was seen of poor tenants being evicted from the Church lands to make room for others who could afford to pay higher rents. The teinds were rigorously assessed on the peasantry, those in arrear being debarred from the communion, and on the death of every parishioner the vicar demanded his mortuary dues—the Kirk Cow and the Upmost Cloth or Coverlet." The interest of low and high was thus opposed to the Church. Many laughed with Lindsay at her superstitions, some had suffered from her sensuality and cruelty. A few looked on her as the synagogue of Satan ruining the souls of men by perverting the Gospel of Christ, and owing her ascendancy in the State to the ignorance of the people.

¹ *Politics and Religion in Scotland*, i. 31.

Reformation Inevitable

Most of the latter belonged to the middle classes and became the disciples of Knox. Their influence was out of all proportion to their numbers, but they had ideas and a character to enforce them. There were thus many and various motives impelling men to cast in their lot with the Reformers. The situation was difficult to dominate for the elements were so heterogeneous. Scotland was almost torn in pieces by it, but she entered on a new era of progress through it, and for this happy issue we are mainly indebted to the fidelity of Knox.

CHAPTER II

THE CALL OF KNOX : HIS EXILE ABROAD AND HIS INFLUENCE AT HOME

ONE thinks of the Reformer as a gaunt, stalwart figure of considerable height. He was, on the contrary (Sir P. Young's letter to Beza), a man of slightly less than average stature, with broad shoulders. The forehead was narrow, and the eyes were sunken but keen, while the face was long, the mouth large, the lips full, and the hair dark. The beard is prominent in all the portraits, and may, in the popular imagination, have added a cubit to his stature. He was, according to Ninian Winzet, somewhat Anglified in his speech.

It is a mistake, also, to suppose that

Discretion of Knox

the Reformer was naturally impulsive. There is no indication of any sympathy with the Protestants till the age of forty-one (1546), when he carries the two-handed sword before George Wishart in East Lothian ; nor does he seem to have long enjoyed the company of the martyr. We find him next year in the Castle of St. Andrews with his pupils, but his own desire was to visit Germany. He might have gone to England, but his opinions were already so advanced that the half measures of Henry VIII. repelled him. There was thus exceptional caution in his attitude towards the movement, and this was maintained even in the Castle. It all goes to prove what is abundantly confirmed in his after life, that Knox generally acted with deliberation, and was prudent as well as courageous. It was not enough to have convictions. There were serious responsibilities about assuming the position of a preacher, and Knox,

John Knox

realising the difficulties and dangers of the situation, naturally hesitated to undertake it. He seems to have been perplexed about his duty, and restricted himself to teaching. This, however, involved the public exposition of Scripture, and it was not long before men like Sir David Lindsay and Henry Balnaves, impressed with his gifts, exhorted him to take upon himself "the public office and charge of preaching." He refused, however, to do so, saying "That he would nott ryn whare God had nott called him." It is thus Knox tells the story, but it is too formal, and yet never was there less formality about any call. The minister of the Castle, John Rough, forthwith made an appeal to him from the pulpit to become a preacher, and after assuring himself that it was the desire of the company, Knox, we read, "burst forth in most abundant tears, and withdrew himself to his chamber." The incident is in harmony with the

Decision of Knox

character of the Reformer. He is not impulsive but reflective, and saw quite clearly the serious dangers implied in a faithful ministry at such a time, but having put his hand to the plough he cut his furrow deep and straight before the eyes of all men. Next Sunday found him in the pulpit of St. Andrews. The pope was declared to be Antichrist, and the professors challenged to refute the doctrine. The sermon produced a great impression upon the people. "Otheris," it was said, "sneid the branches of the Papistrie, but he stryckis at the roote; Maister George Wishart spak never so plainelye, and yitt he was brant; evin so will he be."

Knox, however, had not only to expose the errors of Romanism, but to denounce the immoralities of Protestants. There was much wickedness among those in the Castle and he was not altogether discreet in dealing with it. He discouraged its defenders by predicting divine punishment for their

John Knox

corrupt conduct. "When thei bragged of the force and thickness of thare walles," he said, "Thei should be butt egge-schellis." England even could not deliver them, for God had condemned them to exile for their iniquity. This incident is typical and not creditable to Knox. He tells it in his *History of the Reformation*, and is not ashamed to glory in his gift of prophecy in spite of its exercise exhibiting a sad lack of prudence. The commander would in the circumstances have been amply justified in removing him from the Castle.

The end came, however, as Knox predicted. He soon found himself in a French galley at Nantes. It was there the image of the Virgin was forced upon him to kiss, "a paynted brod, which thei called 'Nostre Dame.'" He dropped it into the water with the remark, "Lett our Lady now saif hir self; sche is lycht aneuch; lett hir learne to swyme."

Knox was a prisoner from the end of

Exile of Knox

July 1547 to March 1549. By April he was in England, where he remained during the next five years—two as preacher at Berwick, the same period at Newcastle, and one in London. The life of Knox as a Reformer was, with two brief intervals, spent outside Scotland till the final struggle before the Reformation. There is his ministry in the Castle of St. Andrews in 1546, and with the exception of a few months from the autumn of 1555 to July 1556 he is absent from his native country till May 1559. He came to England in the reign of Edward VI., and found many in sympathy with his opinions, but the young king died in July 1553, and was succeeded by Mary. She had no favour for Protestants, and Knox therefore sought refuge on the Continent. He went first to Dieppe and then to Geneva. In the autumn of 1554, he was called to the English congregation of Frankfort on the Main, but, owing to disputes with the

John Knox

Anglicans, left the following year to become minister at Geneva. In September 1555 he visits Scotland. The most of the winter is spent in Edinburgh, but the spring is devoted to Ayrshire. On the 15th May he was to answer for heresy, but his friends rallied round him, and the council summoned to meet in the Black Friars' Church, Edinburgh, was not held. It was about this time, at the age of fifty-one, that he married his first wife, Marjorie Bowes, the fifth daughter of a melancholy woman connected with his congregation at Berwick. The correspondence between him and his mother-in-law is most doleful, but she went with her daughter in the end of 1556 to live with them at Geneva, and henceforth to her death was a member of his family.

It is outside my purpose to describe with detail the earnest appeals and stirring incidents gathering round these facts and dates, but the mere statement of them does not sufficiently explain the activity

No Compromise

and influence of Knox. It was due to him that after his visit in 1555 the Protestants seceded from the Romish communion. They had hitherto, in spite of their convictions against it, openly conformed to it. A discussion on the subject took place at supper in the house of Erskine of Dun. Lethington was present, and, as usual, was in favour of temporising. He quoted Paul going up with the four Nazarites to the Temple and associating himself with them in their vows. Knox rather weakly drew a distinction between paying vows and joining the mass. Then he shrewdly suggested that even this action of Paul could not proceed from the Holy Ghost, for, seeing it did not succeed in allaying the tumult, God was evidently displeased with it. "Evill it was to Paul to confirme those obstinat Jewes in thare superstitioun by his exampill; worse it was to him to expose himself, and the doctrin which befoir he had tawght, to sklander and

John Knox

mockage; and tharefoir (concluded the said Johne)¹ that the fact of Paule, and the seqwell that tharof followed, appeired rather to feght against thame that wold go to the Messe, than to geve unto thame any assurance to follow his example." Lethington was vanquished, and confessed: "I see perfyteleye, that our schiftis will serve nothing befoir God, seing that thei stand us in so small stead befoir man." What is more to the purpose the Protestants henceforth made it a matter of conscience to withdraw from the celebration of the mass.

The time was well enough chosen for this action. Mary of Guise was conciliatory. She desired the Crown Matrimonial for her son-in-law, Francis, and needed for that reason the help of the Protestant nobles. They came into favour, and the people asserted their religious liberties against the priests. The Reformers found in this political exigency their opportunity, and organised

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 248.

Troubles of Regent

during this halcyon period their scattered forces. It was now "that great idole called Sanct Geyle" was drowned in the North Loch and then burned. There was naturally "no small truble in the town. For the Freiris rowping lyik reavins upoun the Bischoppes, the Bischoppes ran upoun the Quein, who to thame was favorable ynewch, but that she thowght it could not stand with hir advantage to offend such a multitud as then took upon thame the defence of the Evangell, and the name of Protestantes." Knox then tells us in his raciest manner about the invasion of the western lairds under James Chalmers of Gadgirth. They came to "the verray prevey chalmer" of the Regent and declared in presence of the bishops that their tyranny must cease. "We avow to God," said the indignant James,¹ "we shall maik ane day of it. Thei oppresse us and our tennantes for feading of thare idill bellyes :

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 256.

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thei truble our preachiris, and wold murthir thame and us: Shall we suffer this any longare? Na, Madame: it shall nott be. And tharewith everie man putt on his steill bonet."

Another scene took place on St. Giles' day (September 1) 1558. The image had been destroyed but the procession must be held, and a "marmouset idole" was for this purpose borrowed from the Grey Friars. It was fixed with nails on a barrow. "Thare," we read,¹ "assembled Preastis, Frearis, Channonis, and rottin Papistes, with tabornes and trumpettis, banerris, and bage-pypes, and who was thare to led the ring, but the Queen Regent hir self, with all hir schaivelingis, for honour of that feast." It went down the High Street to Holyrood, and on its return the Regent left to dine at "Sandie Carpetyne's housse betuix the Bowes." This was the signal for a riot, though there were temporisers

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 259.

Downfall of Dagon

like David Forress, called the General, who vainly "laubored to stay the brethrene." A few shouts, a little hustling, and the image was in the hands of the crowd. The priests looked for a miracle, "but when thei saw the febilness of thare god (for one took him by the heillis, and dadding his head to the calsay, left Dagon without head or handis, and said, 'Fye upon thee, thow young Sanct Geile, thy father would haif taryed four such':) this considdered (we say), the Preastis and Freiris fled faster than thei did at Pynckey Clewcht.¹ Thare mycht have bein sein so suddane a fray as seildome has bein sein amonges that sorte of men within this realme: for doun goes the croses, of goes the surpleise, round cappes cornar with the crounes. The Gray Freires gapped, the Blak Freiris blew, the Preastis panted, and fled, and happy was he that first gate the house; for such ane suddan fray came never amonges the gene-

¹ Battle of Pinkie, near Musselburgh.

John Knox

ration of Antichrist within this realme befoir." . . . "The Quein Regent," according to Knox, "lade up this amonges hir other mementoes, till that sche mycht have sein the tyme proper to have revenged it."

The Reformer was not in Scotland during these stirring events, but he was in close communication with the leaders of the people, and using every opportunity to inspire them.

CHAPTER III

HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH SCOTLAND AND HIS WAVERING ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE REFORMERS

It is a mistake, as I have said, to look on Knox as impetuous and foolhardy. He was not only cautious, but, according to his own confession, sometimes culpably so. In March 1557 he received a letter at Geneva from certain of the nobles asking him to return to Scotland. He looks on it as his second call to the position of Reformer. They assure him that circumstances are favourable for his mission—there is less persecution, and many are prepared to support him.

Knox replies, "It shall not be the fear

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of punishment, neither yet of the death temporal, that shall impede my coming to you." He considers the matter and consults Calvin, but it is October before he finds himself at Dieppe. Letters await him from Scotland, and they do not encourage him. The fit of enthusiasm had passed from the Protestants and many were lukewarm. He was indignant and did not conceal it. The answer sent to the nobles is in his best style. "To some it may appear," he writes,¹ "ane small and lycht matter, that I have cast of, and, as it were, abandoned, als weall my particulare care, as my publict office and charge, leaving my house and poore familie destitut of all head, save God only, and committing that small (but to Christ deirlye belovit) flock, ower the which I was appointed one of the ministeris, to the charge of ane other. This, I say, to worldly men may appear a small mater,

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 270.

Warning to Nobles

but to me it was, and yit is such, that more worldly substance then I will expresse, could not have caused me willinglie behold the eies of so many grave men weape at ones for my cause, as that I did, in tackin of my last good nycht frome thame. . . . The caus of my dolour and sorrow (God is witnes) is for nothing pertenyng eyther to my corporall contentment or worldly displeasur: butt it is for the grevouse plagues and punishmentis of God, which assuredly shall apprehend nott only yow, but everie inhabitant of that miserable Realme, and Ile, except that the power of God, by the libertie of his Evangell, deliver yow from bondage. I meane not only that perpetuall fyre and torment, prepared for the Devill, and for such as denying Christ Jesus and his knowin veritie, do follow the sones of wickednes to perdition (which most is to be feared :) butt also that thraldome and miserie

John Knox

shall apprehend your awin bodyes, your childrein, subjectis, and posteritie, whome ye have betrayed (in conscience, I can except none that bear the name of Nobilitie), and presently do feight to betray thame and your Realme to the slaverie of strangeris. . . . Yf any perswad yow, for feir of dangeris that may follow, to faint in your formar purpose, be he never esteemed so wyse and freindly, lett him be judged of yow baith foolish and your mortall ennemy. . . . I am nott ignorant that feirfull trubles shall ensew your enterprise, but O joyfull and comfortable are those trubles and adversities which man susteaneth for the accomplishment of Goddis will. . . . Your subjectis, yea your brethrein are oppressed, thare bodyes and saules haldin in bondage: and God speaketh to your consciences (onles ye be dead with the blynd world) that yow awght to hasard your awin lyves (be it against Kings or Empr-

The "Godly Band"

ouris) for thare deliverance ; for only for that caus ar ye called Princes of the people, and ye receave of your brethrein honour, tribute, and homage at Goddis commandiment : not be reasson of your birth and progenye (as the most part of men falselie do suppose), but by ressoun of your office and dewtie, which is to vindicate and deliver your subjectes and brethrein from all violence and oppressioun to the uttermost of your power." The result of his letter was the first "godly band" or Covenant (December 3, 1557), in defence of Protestantism. The Reformers openly renounced Popery, and insisted on liberty to worship God according to their conscience. It was on the eve of the young Queen's marriage with Francis, and the Regent, Mary of Guise, was not in a position to resist them. One would have thought that Knox would in these circumstances have been impatient to visit Scotland. It is not a dignified position to

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write letters urging martyrdom on others while shrinking from it oneself. Nor was the apathy general. The Covenant signed by the Protestants in the end of the year proved how much they were in earnest. Knox, indeed, was alarmed at their action, and rumours of a rebellion in Scotland circulated in Dieppe. He had exhausted his fervour in his first letter, and a fortnight after the "godly band" was formed (December 17) they are exhorted to caution. It was needed. There were factions in the country little influenced by religion. He warned them to act in the fear of God. He implored them not to "suddanlie disobey or displeas the establissit autoritie in thingis lawfull," nor to "assist or fortifie suche as, for their awn particular cause and warldlie promotioun, wold trubill the same." He reminded them, in conclusion, that there is a great difference "betwix lawfull obedience, and ane feirfull flattering of princes, or ane

Law and Order

unjust accomplishment of thair desyres in thingis whilk be requyrit or devysit for the distructioun of a Commoun-welth."

There is no reason to sneer at this conduct of Knox, or to infer from one instance that he was in the habit of urging martyrdom on others while shrinking from it himself. It only indicates that he was human, and not altogether indifferent to danger even in the service of God. One may be faithful and not reckless, while it is sometimes difficult to determine one's duty. Knox was afterwards not quite satisfied with the prudence exhibited on this occasion, but a good man may make mistakes with the best intentions, and few have dealt more severely with themselves than Knox. He is wonderfully frank on this subject in a letter to Mrs. Guthrie, wife of the City Clerk of Edinburgh, in the following spring (April 16). "This dar I say," he writes, "that sumtymes (seldome, allace!) I feill a sob and

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grone, willing that Chryst Jesus mycht opinlie be preachit in my native countrey, with a certain desyre that my earis myght heir it, althocht it should be with the loss of this wreachit lyfe. And of verie purpos to haif visited yow did I leif this congregatioun heir, and also the familie committed to my particular charge: but the cause of my stop do I not to this day clearlie understand: I maist suspect my awn wickitnes. . . . It may be that my God maist justlie hath permitted Sathan to put in my mind sic cogitationis as did impeid my journey toward you at this present: and they wer theis: I hard sic trubillis as appeirit in that realme, I began to disput with myself as followeth:— Sall Christ, the author of peace, concord, and quyetness, be preachit whair weir is proclamit, seditioun engenderit, and tumults appeir to ryse? Sall not his Evangell be accusit as the caus of all calamitie whilk is lyke to follow? What comfort canst

Self-Accusation

thou have to sie the one-half of the pepill
ryse up aganis the other ; yea, to jeopard
the ane, to murther and destroy the other,
but above all, what joy sall it be to thy
hart to behold with thi eyes thi native
contrey betrayd in the handis of strangeris,
whilk to na manis judgment can be
avoydit, becaus that thay wha aucht to
defend it, and the libertie thair of, ar sa
blind, dull, and obstinat, that thay will
not sie thair awn destructioun. . . . I
grant that nane of theis dangeris whilk
are befor expressit, ar any sufficient cause
or excuse why that I should not hasard
all for the manifestatioun of Chrystis
glorie ; for gif thi Apostillis had lukit to
any of theis, thay should never have
preachit Chryst. . . . And thairfor, I say,
I know that na cogitatiounis can excuse
me befor God : for my conscience beireth
record that the salvatioun of my brethrein
aucht to be as deir unto me, that it aucht
to be socht with the hasard of all that

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is on earth. . . . It may also be that the doubtis and cald wryttings of some brethrene did augment my dolour, and sumwhat discorage me, that befoir was mair nor febill: for Sathan is sa subtill, that he can mak the verie elect of God labour and travell for a tyme to stop the preaching of the Evangell.” One cannot but respect the writer of such a letter. His courage for the time failed Knox. It was not merely that he might die, but die to little purpose and drag others with him to the same hapless doom. It reminds us of Mazzini.¹ He had been sentenced to perpetual exile from the Swiss Republic, and came to London in 1837. He touched the lowest depths of poverty, but his mental condition made him even more miserable. “I felt myself a criminal,” he writes, “conscious of guilt, yet incapable of expiation. The forms of those shot at

¹ The Camelot Series—Introduction to Mazzini's *Essays*, p. xv.

Mazzini

Alessandria and Chambery rose up before me like the phantoms of a crime and its unavailing remorse. I could not recall them to life. How many mothers I had caused to weep! How many more must learn to weep, should I persist in the attempt to arouse the youth of Italy to noble action, to awaken in them the yearning for a common country! And if that country were indeed an illusion?" Such thoughts will come at times to the most honourable man, and all the more so if he be honourable; but there are, unfortunately, other incidents not so easily explained with credit to the Reformer. Knox was human, and therefore subject to infirmity, aye, even to dishonesty, for one charge is well substantiated against him. It was an age when a French fleet could fly the Scottish flag, and monarchs laughed at keeping promises to their subjects. Duplicity and falsehood were characteristic of diplomacy.

John Knox

It was seldom that Knox played the part of politician, but even he could not pass through the mud without getting soiled. When the Protestants were hard pressed by the French, Knox came to Berwick to negotiate for an English force with Sir John Crofts. Elizabeth was then at peace with France. After suggesting to the Governor certain pleas that might be urged in the circumstances, he concludes: "If ye fear that such excuses shall not prevail, you may declare them rebels to your realm when ye shall be assured that they be in our company" (Hume Brown's *Knox*, vol. ii., taken from *Calendar of Scottish Papers*, vol. i. p. 256). It gave his enemies an opportunity to lecture him on morals, and had, no doubt, a prejudicial effect on his position.

The world, however, does not judge one by isolated acts but by his habits and disposition, his customary attitude and

Just Judgment

general character. It has done so with Knox, and is so far just. He was in this sense exceptionally honest and eminently courageous.

CHAPTER IV

"THE MONSTROUS REGIMENT OF WOMEN"

DURING the time that he was absent in France the Protestant crowd were playing high jinks with young St. Giles and otherwise disporting themselves. The Queen Regent was pushing her scheme for the Crown Matrimonial to Francis and could not therefore afford to quarrel with them. She got it in November 1558, and in the same month Elizabeth ascended the throne of England. The Romanists united against her, and the Regent joined the League. The Guises, in fact, were conspicuous members of it. Scotland was again divided in favour of England or France, of Protestantism or Popery. Mary became the centre of

A Notorious Pamphlet

a conspiracy against Protestantism, and continued to be so till her head fell at Fotheringay Castle. Knox, meanwhile, was busy preaching in various towns of France, and in the beginning of 1558 settled again at Geneva. He had written the famous "pasquil" to the Queen Regent, and in the beginning of the year published the notorious pamphlet entitled, "The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women." It was directed mainly against Mary of England, but she died in a few months and Knox found it was equally resented by Elizabeth, her successor, who, though a Protestant, was also a woman.

In 1554 Knox had asked Bullinger "whether a Female can preside over, and rule a Kingdom by divine right?" This theologian in the general principle agrees with Knox. Scripture is explicit on the subjection of woman, but he thinks it is "a hazardous thing for godly persons to set

John Knox

themselves in opposition to political regulations." The answer was simply an evasion and cannot have been considered satisfactory. The First and, as it turned out, the only Blast, though other two were threatened, was written at Dieppe in the end of 1557. It so prejudiced the English Court against the Swiss reformers that Calvin was constrained to write Cecil on the subject. He too confesses the government of women "a deviation from the original and proper order of nature." God, however, by notable examples had authorised it, and as many states had adopted it he believed it judicious to acquiesce in it. "I came at length to this conclusion," he writes,¹ "that since, both by custom and public consent, and long practice, it has been established, that realms and principalities may descend to females by hereditary right, it did not appear to me necessary to move the question, not only because the thing would

¹ Knox's *Works*, iv. 357.

Calvin's Opinion

be invidious, but because in my opinion it would not be lawful to unsettle governments which are ordained by the peculiar providence of God." It was a year before he knew about the existence of the book, and he had frankly expressed his regret "that such paradoxes should be published." Calvin here as elsewhere displayed the qualities of a diplomatist and a statesman. Knox sometimes suppressed his convictions, but his conscience always troubled him for such discretion. "It is our dutie," he writes in the beginning of his pamphlet, "to open the truth revealed unto us unto the ignorant and blind world; unless that to our owne condemnation we list to wrap up and hyde the talent committed to our charge. I am assured that God hath reveled to some in this our age, that it is more then a monstre in nature that a woman shall reigne and have empire above man. And yet with us all there is suche silence, as if God therewith were nothing

John Knox

offended." He gives short shrift to the prudence displayed by those like Calvin. They have really not made much by it, for their doctrine has been described "by terms of sedition of newe learning, and of treason"; while a little more of it would have left them Papists. Knox will therefore deliver his soul, though fully persuaded that his labour "shall not escape reprehension of many. . . . I shalbe called foolishe, curious, despitefull, and a sower of sedition; and one day parchance (althogh now be nameles) I may be attainted of treason."

The proposition of the pamphlet is set forth in these words: "To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion, or empire above any Realme, Nation, or Citie, is repugnant to Nature; contumelie to God, a thing most contrarious to his reveled will and approved ordinance; and finally, it is the subversion of good Order, of all equitie and justice."

Proposition of Pamphlet

One is not led by the blind nor supported by the weak. It is contrary to nature, but "such," continues Knox, "be al women, compared unto man in bearing of authorities. For their sight in civile regiment is but blindnes: their strength weaknes: their counsel foolishnes: and judgment phrensie, if it be rightlie considered." There are, no doubt, exceptions, but, "Nature, I say, doth paynt them furthe to be weake, fraile, impatient, feble, and foolishe; and experience hath declared them to be unconstant, variable, cruell, and lacking the spirit of counsel and regiment." There may be some truth in this position, but the general statement is not only injudicious, it is offensive and unjust. It is supported by a certain parade of learning. There is an appeal to antiquity, and Aristotle is quoted as affirming that where women bear rule "they must nedes come to confusion and ruine." It is in the Scriptures, however, that he finds his

John Knox

armoury of arguments. Much is made of Eve having listened to the Serpent. He quotes Tertullian, about her being the "porte and gate of the Devil," forgetting that the story rather reflects on the weakness of Adam. In his case the smile of Eve was sufficient. There was no need for Satan to exercise his subtlety upon him. Paul is of course greatly in evidence. If a woman is not suffered to teach, she is clearly incompetent to rule. These decrees sound rather drastic to us. There is so little wisdom among us that we are willing to accept it from any quarter and derive great profit from the prelections of Priscilla on suitable subjects. We are often inclined to place restrictions on the teaching of men, but find it wiser even to suffer fools gladly. The Fathers are quoted, but they have all the prejudices of antiquity and a few peculiar to themselves that would have prevented women from ever becoming even wives

Absurdity of Arguments

and mothers. One feels that Knox is on firmer ground in his reference to the brute beasts. "No man ever sawe the lion make obedience, and stoupe before the lionesse." It may be so, but one cannot attribute this attitude to kindly instincts or superior intelligence. Much must, no doubt, be forgiven Knox when we consider the circumstances of his pamphlet. The cause of Protestantism was at stake. Mary had succeeded Edward VI. on the throne of England and was about to marry the King of Spain, thus forming a league that threatened to crush it. The time was out of joint, and Knox was embittered by the situation. He expressed his feelings without restraint, and thereby exasperated his enemies to the injury of his friends. It is impossible to defend either his attitude or his language. He encourages his readers, by the assassination of Athaliah, to armed revolt. "The same is the dutie," he writes, "of the Estates as of the People

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that hath bene blinded. First, They ought to remove frome honor and authoritie that monstre in nature : So call I a woman cled in the habit of a man, yea a woman against nature reigning above man. Secondarilie, If any presume to defend that impiety, they ought not to feare first to pronounce, and then after to execute against them the sentence of deathe. If any man be affraid to violat the oth of obedience which they have made to suche monstres, let them be most assuredly persuaded, that as the beginning of their othes, proceeding from ignorance, was sinne, so is the obstinate purpose to kepe the same nothing but plaine rebellion against God." One is not surprised that such writing should have given great offence. It was foolish to allow his indignation against the conduct of the Queen of England and the Queen Regent of Scotland to launch him into a general question about the right of women to rule, and the treatment of it

Results of Pamphlet

was so subversive of social order as to alienate the sympathy of every statesman. It stirred up persecution against the Protestantists under Mary and it made Knox odious in the eyes of Elizabeth when the interests of the Reformers were very dependent on her favour. Her ascension affected the English residents at Geneva, and Knox also resolved to return to Scotland. Before leaving he received in recognition of his services the freedom of the city. He proceeded to Dieppe, and there wrote an extraordinary letter to Sir William Cecil. He fails to appreciate the position of this great statesman, and imagines himself prophetic when he is only inconsiderate. It was of the utmost importance for Scotland to have the goodwill of this minister, but Knox lectures him like a schoolboy. "Ye have followed the world," he writes, "in the way of perdition. For to the suppressing of Christis trew Evangell, to the

John Knox

erecting of idolatrie, and to the shedding of the blood of Goddis most deare childrein have you, by silence, consented and subscrivit." He has, however, been graciously dealt with, and preserved from the persecutions of "that professed ennemie of God, mischievous Mary." All this is, no doubt, for a purpose, and as he has been promoted to honour and dignity though "wourthie of hell" his repentance for his "former defection" must be the more conspicuous. He reminds him that according to rumour he is far too much inclined to "carnall wisdome and worldly policie," while he warns him that if in the cause of Christ he be not found simple, sincere, fervent and unfeigned he will drink the cup of dissembling diplomatists. Knox has a grievance against Cecil. He is sore at being refused permission to travel through England, and sees no excuse for thus having been made to suffer in himself and in his friends. He had, of

Letter to Cecil

course, written his book against the government of women, but this is not sufficient to justify his treatment. Its principal proposition is the truth of God. He will not therefore apologise for it. He denies that there is anything treasonable in it, and professes to be thoroughly loyal to the present sovereign. He must, however, indulge in no ambiguous phrases, and so he writes: "Moir plainlie to speik, yf Quene Elizabeth sall confesse that the extraordinarie dispensatioun of Goddis great mercie macketh that lauchfull unto her, whiche boyth nature and Goddis law do deny to all women, then sall non in England be more willing to mainteine her lauchfull authoritie then I salbe." It is, however, presumption for her to found her title on the ordinances of men. By so doing she will inevitably offend the majesty of God and involve herself in punishment. The worst qualities of Knox appear in such an epistle. He sometimes

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confounded discourtesy with sincerity, but still the letter concludes with a simple dignity altogether to the credit of the Reformer. He sinks himself in his cause, and to the best of his ability makes himself a humble servant of Jesus Christ. It is his third request to visit England, and he gives good reasons for his importunity. "Lett none," he writes, "be affrayed that I requyre to frequent the Courte, other yet of any continuance to remaine in England; but onelye thristis in passing furthe to my owin native countrie, to communicat with you and sum uther, suche thingis as willinglie I list nott to committ to paper, neither yet to the knowledge and creddit of many; and then in the northe pairtes, to offer Goddis favouris to suche as I suppoise, do murne for thair defectioun. And this I trust salbe no less profitable to Her Grace, and to all godlie within England, then it sould be pleiseing to me in the flesche." It is

Silence of Cecil

a manly though an injudicious letter, thoroughly characteristic of Knox. Cecil vouchsafed no answer, and so he sailed to Scotland and landed at Leith May 2, 1559.

CHAPTER V

KNOX IN SCOTLAND

THE Queen Regent had changed her policy and was engaged in a final struggle with her Protestant subjects. She was well supported by the armies of France, and the people were generally indifferent. It was not the most favourable opportunity for a timid Protestant to visit Scotland, but it was chosen by Knox. He was soon appointed Minister of Edinburgh, but owing to the troubles of the country did not for a year reside in the city. He came, as he puts it, "evin in the brunt of the battle," and took at once a foremost place in it. The greatness of Knox was exhibited not only in his courage but in

Knox and Elizabeth

his self-abnegation. He was willing to humble himself for the success of the cause, and so in spite of Cecil ignoring his first letter he wrote, July 1559, another, with one enclosed to Elizabeth. They are interesting and characteristic productions. He does not resile from his position, but is quite complimentary to the Queen. "Gif the most pairt of women be wicked," he writes, "and suche as willinglie we wold nott reigne over us : and gif the most godlie, and suche as have rare graces be yett mortall, we aucht to tak heid, least in establissing one judged godlie and profitable to hir countrey, we mak ane entres and tytill to mony : off quhome not only sall the treuth be impugned, bot also sall the countray be brocht in bondage." He asks liberty to visit the north of England as "an unfeaned friend" of the Queen, and in his letter addresses her as "the verteous and godlie Elizabeth." Knox must on this occasion have made a

John Knox

special effort to play the courtier, but he does it awkwardly. Elizabeth did not really deserve his unctuous compliments, but it was hardly discreet in seeking a favour to insist on his abstract proposition against the government of women. She might be regarded as an exception if she would only exercise her prerogative with modesty, and humble herself before God. "Ungrate," he writes, "Ye sall be provein in presence of his throne (howsoever that flattereris justifie your factioun) gif ye transferr the glorye of that honor, in quhilk ye now stand, to any uther thing, then to the dispensatioun of his mercie, which only maketh that lauchfall to your Grace, quhilk nature and law denyeth to all women." It is of no account to appeal in such a matter to the institutions of men, seeing it is contrary to the Word of God. "Quhatsoever he condempneth salbe condempned, thocht all men in Earth wold hasard the justificatioun of the same. . . . Forgett

A Tactless Courtier

youre birth," he continues, "and all tytill which thairuponn doeth hing: and consider deiplye, how far for feir of your lyef, ye did declyne from God, and bow till idollatrie. Lett it not appeire ane small offence in your eyes, that ye have declyned from Christ Jesus in the day of his batteill. . . . Gif thus, in Goddis presence, ye humill yourself, as in my heart I glorifie God for that rest granted to his afflicted flocke within Ingland, under you a weik instrument: so will I with tounge and penn justifie your Authoritie and Regiment as the Holy Ghost hath justified the same in Debora, that blessed mother in Israell."¹ It is difficult to realise how such a letter would impress Elizabeth, and it has even been hinted that Cecil was too diplomatic to deliver it. There is certainly a rude dignity about it, but it indicates a singular ignorance of human nature and an absence of power to adapt oneself to it. Knox

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 30.

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would never, of course, make himself agreeable at the expense of truth, and yet he must consciously have stretched a point to compliment Elizabeth. It was adroit to consider Elizabeth an exception and therefore a miracle to be specially honoured for herself, but it was clumsy to emphasise her shortcomings and to remind her that she held her throne merely on sufferance. It was the culmination of an exceedingly unfortunate situation created by a very injudicious pamphlet, but it was certainly provoked by circumstances and was supposed to be justified by Scripture.

Knox had already been excommunicated and might suffer death at any moment, but meant to play the man with all possible address and courage. The world had hitherto known him mainly as the preacher and the pamphleteer ; he is henceforth to appear as the hero and the statesman. After spending two nights in Edinburgh he went to Dundee, a town distinguished

Miry Ways

for its Protestantism, and then to Perth, propounding the doctrine, "Doun with those crow nests, else the crowes will big in them againe." A riot followed his preaching. The sword was now drawn, and it was only sheathed after the Reformers had defeated their enemies. It meant rough work, and they did not shrink from it. They deprived the Regent of the stamps for coining on the plea that she was debasing the currency, and they practically deposed her in the name and authority of their two sovereigns now in France. This falsehood was, of course, only a transparent veil for their rebellion. It was a dirty business, as all political convulsions are, and posterity finds the mutual recriminations of Romanists and Protestants somewhat tedious reading. Knox held on his way towards the City of God not altogether free from mud but singularly patriotic and upright—a great man thoroughly resolved to sacrifice him-

John Knox

self in the great cause. He went with the Lords of the Congregation to Fife, and preached in St. Andrews in spite of the intimidation of the Archbishop. The Church was forthwith purged of idolatry and the monasteries pulled down. There was thus some discrimination in the rage of the crowd. By the end of June, Knox was back in Edinburgh. He had soon to leave it, however, on the approach of the Regent with her army. She took up a strong position at Leith, and held the Castle. The Protestants received little support from the people, and their prospects were gloomy enough; but negotiations were going on with England, and as it was clearly the policy of Elizabeth to keep the French out of Scotland she ultimately consented to support the Reformers. This settled the controversy between the Regent and her subjects. She had fought her fight and was about to finish her course. She was suffering from dropsy,

Death of Regent

and sought refuge in the Castle, where, after listening to the exhortations of a Protestant preacher, she departed this life with expressions of goodwill to all associated with her—another evidence of how often one is better than one's creed. Peace was at last concluded, July 6, 1560, but the treaty was never ratified because Mary would not give up her claim to the crown of England.

The Reformation, however, was established in Scotland. The Parliament met in August, and the Confession of Faith was adopted. It was remarkable for a numerous attendance of the inferior gentry, who had not exercised their rights to legislate for seventy-three years.

"Of the Temporall Estate," writes Knox, "onlie voted in the contrair, the Erle of Atholl, the Lordis Somervail and Borthwik: and yit for their disassenting thei produced no better reassone" but "we will beleve as oure fatheris beleved.

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The Bischoppis (Papisticall we meane) spack nothing." The jurisdiction of the Pope henceforth ceased in Scotland, and a law was passed threatening every one administering, receiving, or participating by his presence in the mass to confiscation of goods for the first, banishment for the second, and death for the third offence.

- Knox kept up the courage of his brethren by an exposition of Haggai. They did not, however, all share his zeal in the construction of the temple. Lethington
- mocked, and said with a sneer: "We mon now forget our selffis, and beir the barrow to build the housses of God," indicating how little the nobles were influenced by religion in their efforts to reform the Church.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH AND THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE

THE Confession was mainly the work of Knox, though Winram, Spottiswoode, Willock, Douglas, and Row were associated with him. It consists of twenty-five chapters, and is strictly Calvinistic. This is best seen by an extract from the 16th chapter defining the Kirk. It consists of those who "have the fruitioun of the most inestimable benefites ; to witt of one God, of one Lord Jesus, one faith, and one baptisme : out of which Kirk there is neither life nor eternall felicitie. And, therefor, we utterlie abhorre the blasphemy of them that affirme, that men who live according

John Knox

to equitie and justice sall be saved, what religion that ever they have professed. For as without Christ Jesus there is neither life nor salvatioun, so sall there none be participant thereof, but suche as the Father hath given unto his Sonne Christ Jesus." It finds the notes of the true Church in (1) the preaching of the Word of God ; (2) the right administration of the Sacraments ; and (3) in ecclesiastical discipline according to the Word of God.

{ A somewhat high doctrine of the Sacraments is held, in close conformity to the position of Calvin. "We utterlie damne," it reads, "the vanitie of them that affirme the Sacraments to be nothing elles but naked and bare signes." One is sorry for Zuinglius. The attitude towards Scripture is liberal. The canonical books contain "all things necessarie to be beleevved for the salvatioun of man . . . the interpretation whereof we confesse, neither apperteaneth to privat nor publick persoun, neither yitt

The Civil Magistrate

to anie Kirk, for anie pre-eminence or prerogative personallie or locallie, which one hath above another : but apperteaneth to the Spirit of God, by the which also the Scripture was written." The office of the civil magistrate is unduly emphasised. It is frankly recognised that emperors, kings, princes, and dukes are ordained "for the singular profyte and commoditie of mankind." They are consequently worthy to be "holdin in most reverent estimatioun." Then comes the crux of the chapter : to them "we affirme that cheeflie and most principallie, the conservatioun and purgatioun of religioun apperteaneth : so that not only they are appointed for civill policie, but also for maintenance of true religioun, and for suppressing of idolatrie and superstitioun whatsomever, as in David, Josephat, Ezekias, Josias, and others highlie commended for their zeale in this case may be espied." ¹

¹ Calderwood's *History*, ii. 35.

John Knox

There will be to all a resurrection of the flesh, and such "as now delite in vanitie, crueltie, filthinesse, superstitioun, or idolatrie, sall be adjudged to the fire unquenchable, in which they sall be tormented for ever, as weill in their owne bodies as in their soules."

This Confession is briefer and ruder than the one with which we are familiar. The latter takes its name from the Westminster Divines who compiled it, but the two in doctrine are essentially similar. The Church of Scotland was from the Reformation consistently and unmistakably Calvinistic. The Confession was not ratified by the King and Queen, for Sir James Sandilands had hardly arrived in France for that purpose when the King died, stricken, as it was said, "in that deafe ear that never would heare the truthe of God."

The first General Assembly was held on December 20, 1560, a few months

The Book of Discipline

after Protestantism had been officially adopted as the religion of Scotland. It consisted of forty members, only six of whom were ministers.

In the midst of this activity Knox lost his wife, but it does not seem to have interrupted his labours, though he assures us in the History "he was in no small heaviness be reassone of the late death of his dear bedfellow, Marjorie Bowis." Calvin writes to express his sympathy with him, and in fact they seem to have been in constant correspondence about the ecclesiastical condition of Scotland.

A convention was held on January 15, 1561, and the Lord James Stuart was commissioned to bring home his sister, the Queen, from France. She was expected in May. Its chief importance to us, however, consists in the fact that the *First Book of Discipline* or Policy of the Kirk was submitted to it. Some of the nobles were good enough to profess their accept-

John Knox

ance of it, but others objected to the proposed destination of Church property. There were, as in the Confession, six names associated with it, but Knox in both cases was the dominating influence, and this system of ecclesiastical polity does him credit. One finds in the *Book of Common Order*, also attributed to him, as early as 1556¹ a sketch of his opinions about the government and discipline of the Church, but here they are presented more in detail. He lets himself go, and in many respects it would have been well for Scotland if his proposals had been adopted, but while he was omnipotent against the superstitions of Rome he was powerless against the avarice of the nobles. "Some of them," writes M'Crie,² "had seized upon Church lands, or retained the tithes in their own hands. Others had taken long leases of them from the clergy for small sums of

¹ Dr. Sprott's Introduction to *Book of Common Prayer*, p. xiv.

² *Life of Knox*, p. 169.

Rule of Life

money and were anxious to have these private bargains legalised. Hence their aversion to have the Book of Discipline ratified."

It may not be without interest to emphasise certain points in this characteristic production. It is altogether out of harmony with modern ideas of government. There is little respect shown to the liberty of the subject, and no hesitation in using constraint to secure desirable conditions of living for all classes in the community. The Word of God must rule in everything, and for this reason one should abolish "the superstitious observatioun of fasting dayis, difference of meit for conscience saik, prayer for the deid: and keping of holy dayis of certane Sanctis. . . . The obstinat mayntenaris and teacheris of suche abominatiouns aucht not to eschaip the punyschement of the Civile Magistrat."¹

The second chapter deals with the

¹ The quotations are from Knox's *Works*, ii.

John Knox

Sacraments and refers for instruction to the *Book of Common Order*, sometimes known as *Knox's Liturgy*. It consisted of a Confession of Faith used in the English Congregation at Geneva of which he was minister, forms for the election of superintendents, ministers, elders and deacons, prayers for public worship and special occasions, services for the administration of the Sacraments for marriages and baptisms, with certain psalms and hymns. It was generally used by the readers but was never made binding on ministers, and does not imply any preference on the part of the Reformers for a prayer-book. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not to be taken kneeling, but sitting according to the manner of its first celebration and in conformity with the idea that it is a social ordinance where all present hold communion with each other through the one Lord.

The third chapter is concerned with

The Ministry

idolatry, by which is understood the mass, the invocation of saints and the adoration of images.

The fourth relates to the election of ministers. It belongs to the people to invite one to assume this office, but a true call consists of election, examination and admission, so that the candidate must satisfy his brethren as well as the congregation. The right to elect if neglected for forty days might lapse to the ministers. There was in ordination to be no imposition of hands for "seing the mirakle is ceassed, the using of the ceremonie we juge is nott necessarie." It was impossible to be an effective minister without scholarship and ability; "Neather juge we," it is said, "that the Sacramentis can be rychtlie ministered by him, in quhais mouth God hes put no sermoun of exhortioun." One must compel such men "as have giftis and graces able to edifie the Kirk of God, that thae bestow thame

John Knox

quhair greittest necessitie salbe knowin ;
for no man may be permittit to leve idill,
or as thame self list, but must be appointed
to travell quhair your Wisdomes and the
Kirk sall think expedient."

In the great dearth of ministers readers were frequently employed to conduct the service, but they were never allowed to administer the Sacraments. They were encouraged, however, to exercise their gifts, and might ultimately for their merit be raised to the ministry, just as ministers for their incapacity might be reduced to the position of readers. The Church was in earnest and therefore demanded efficiency.

The fifth chapter sets forth their ideas as to a proper provision for those fit to undertake such duties. It must be not only sufficient during their lifetime but also "for thair wiffis and childrene efter thame." There are to be no equal stipends to those with unequal demands upon them, so that in any division due

Maintenance of Clergy

respect is to be had to one's responsibilities. Every minister is to be sustained honestly in all things necessary, such as clothes, flesh, fish, books and fuel, out of the rents and treasury of the Church. He should at least have forty bolls of meal and twenty-six bolls of malt to keep his house in bread and beer, more if necessary, "besydes money for buying of other provisioun." These should be given him a quarter of a year in advance. It seems liberal, but the superintendent's horse was to get forty-eight bolls of oats, a more generous allowance by eight bolls than the meal assigned to the minister's family. "I suspect," writes Principal Lee,¹ "that the hospitality which was supplied from the stipend of an ordinary minister must have consisted rather in drinking than in eating, if the whole grain allowed for his maintenance and that of his wife and children and domestics, as well as for the

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 165.

John Knox

entertainment of strangers, was a good deal less than is said to have sufficed to feed the superintendent's horse. 'What! but one halfpenny worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack.' I need not add that there is more of fancy than of reality in the notion of clerical conviviality in the days of John Knox, though we know that the Reformer himself sometimes had a hogshead of wine in his cellar."

The children of ministers should have the freedom of the city in which or near which their fathers laboured. They should share in all the privileges of the school, and if likely to profit by learning, receive bursaries at college, or if not they should be "put to some handycraft, or exercised in some verteous industrie, quhairby thae may be profitable members in a commounwealth." The daughters should likewise be assisted and "honestlie doted quhen thae come to maturitie of yeiris, at the discretioun of the Kirk." The authors

Virtue Rewarded

are quite serious in these proposals and consider them not merely for the good of the clergy but for "the proffeit of the posteritie to come." Then follows an admirable confession on their part. "It is," they say, "nott to be supposed that any man will dedicat him self and childrene so to God and to serve his Kirk, that thae luyke for no warldlie commoditie. But this cankered nature whilk we beare, is provokit to follow vertew quhen it seith honour and profite annexit to the same : as contrairlie, then is vertew of mony despised, quhen verteouse and godlie men leve without honour. And sorye wuld we be that povertie suld discourage men from studye, and from following the way of vertew, by the quhilk thae mycht edifie the Kirk and flock of Christ Jesus."

Readers were also to teach the children of the parish and would receive forty merks. After two years they might become ex-

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horters with a stipend of a hundred merks, but if after such trial they had no gift for the ministry they were removed. The office was altogether abolished by the Assembly of 1581.¹

The poor have also their right in the patrimony of the Kirk. "We are nott," they say, "patronis for stubburne and idill beggaris, quho, rynning from place to place, mak a craft of their beggyng, quhom the Civile Magistrat aucht to punyshe ; but for the wedow and fatherless, the aiged, impotent, or laymed, quho neather can nor may travell for thair sustentatioun, we say, that God commandeth his pepill to be cairfull ; and thairfor, for such, as also for personis of honestie fallen into decay and penuritie, aucht such provisioun be maid that of our abundance should their indigence be releaved. How this most convenientlie and most easilie may be done in

¹ *Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland*, p. 219 ; *M'Crie's Life of Knox*, p. 369.

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everie citie, and uther partis of this Realme, God shall schow you wisdome and the meanis, so that youre myndis be godlie thairto inclyned. All must not be suffered to beg that gladlie so wold do: neither yit must beggaris remane whare thei chuse: but the stout and strong beggar must be compelled to wirk, and everie persoun that may nocht wirk, must be compelled to repair to the place whare he or sche was born (unles of long continuance thae have remaned in one place), and thair reassonable provisioun must be maid for thair sustentatioun as the Church shall appoint."

Again in the chapter on the patrimony of the Kirk we read: "But befoir we enter on this heid, we must crave of your Honouris in the name of the Eternall God and of his Son Christ Jesus, that ye have respect to your pure brethren, the lauboraris and manuraris of the ground; who by these creuell beastis the Papistis have bene so oppressit, that thair life to thame have bene

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dolorus and bitter. Yf ye will have God author and approver of youre reformatioun, ye must nott follow thair futesteppis ; but ye must have compassioun upon your brethren, appointing thame to pay so reasonabill teyndis, that thei may feill sum benefit of Christ Jesus, now precheit unto thame. With the greaf of our hertis we heare, that sum gentilmen are now als creuell over thair tennentis as ever war the Papistis, requiring of them whatsoever befor thay payit to the Churche ; so that the Papisticall tirrannye shall onlie be changeit in the tirrannye of the lord or of the laird." All are enjoined to account to the deacons for their teinds, and if they think this prejudicial to the interests of present holders, they are to "understand that ane unjust possessioun is no possessioun befor God ; for those of whome thei receaved thair titill and presupposed richt, war and ar theives and murtheraris, and had no power so to alienate the patrimonye and

The Poor

commoun-gude of the Church." It should, of course, be remembered as some excuse for the nobles that their predecessors must have mainly contributed to the wealth it enjoyed.

The Reformers were thus by no means indifferent to the poor, and did not hesitate to declare their duties to the rich, but they pled the cause of the poor in vain. The corruption of the Church had gradually put the tenants of abbeys under the lay lords, and the Reformation only confirmed and extended this arrangement, with the result that their burdens in the form of rent and taxes became heavier. In 1562 the Assembly sent a remonstrance to the Queen and her Privy Council, in which, among other complaints, we read: "Our Third requeast concerneth the Poore, who be of thre sortis: the poore lauboraris of the ground; the poore desolat beggaris, orphelyns, wedoes, and strangaris; and the poore ministeris of Christ Jesus his holie evangell, quhilk ar

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all so crewallie entreated by this last pretended Ordour tacken for sustentatioun of ministeris, that thair latter miserie far surmounteth the formar, for now the poor lauboraris of the ground are so oppressed by the creualtie of those that pay their Third, that they for the most parte advance upoun the poore, whatsoever thay pay to the Quene or to any other." The reference here is to the arrangement made about Church property at the Reformation. Two-thirds of it went to present holders, in other words, practically to the nobility. Many of the abbeys and priories were already under the headship of laymen and were easily converted into temporal lordships. There were still, of course, the teinds or spirituality, but these had already in great part been allocated to monasteries and cathedrals. The revenues of thirty-four parish churches, for example, went to support the abbey of Arbroath. These were supplied by vicars content to resign

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the great teinds drawn from grain and to accept a nominal stipend, or at the most the small teind of hay, dairy and garden produce, besides that of live stock. The patrimony of the Church thus found itself swept almost entirely into the net of the nobles. Two-thirds of it were, as I have said, assigned to present holders, but the remaining third was claimed for public purposes, and ultimately divided to defray the expenses of the Court and the maintenance of the Church. The landlords enjoying Church property were thus assessed only on a third of its value, and yet this tax, according to the *Book of Discipline*, they squeezed out of their tenants by rent or otherwise. "As for the verray indigent and poore," it proceeds, "to whome God commandis a sustentatioun to be provided of the Teyndis, they are so dyspised, that it is a wonder that the sone geveth heat and lycht to the earth, whair Godis name is so frequently called upoun,

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and no mercy (according to his commandment) schawin to his creatures."

There is a fine passage breathing a similar spirit of justice and compassion in the *Treatise on Fasting*, said to be composed by Knox and Craig in the end of 1565.¹ "The law of man," it reminds us, "cannot convince the earl, the lord, the baron, or gentleman, for the oppression of the poor labourers of the ground, for his defence is ready : I may do with mine own as best pleaseth me. The merchant is just enough in his own conceit, if before men he cannot be convicted of theft and deceit. The artificer or craftsman thinketh himself free before God, albeit that he neither work sufficient stuff, nor yet sell it for reasonable price. The world is evil, saith he, and how can men live if they do not as others do? And thus doth every man lean on the iniquity of another, and thinketh himself sufficiently

¹ Dr. Sprott's *Book of Common Order*, p. 173.

The Golden Rule

excused when that he meeteth craft with craft, and repulseth back violence either with deceit or else with open injury. Let us be assured, dear brethren, that these be the sins which heretofore have provoked God, not only to plague but also to destroy and utterly overthrow strong realms and flourishing commonwealths." It then goes on to enjoin every one to consider his duty according to the law of Christ : " ' Whatsoever,' saith he, ' that ye would men should do unto you, do ye the like unto them.' By this rule, which the Author of all equity, justice and policy hath established, if we appointed the earls, lords, barons, and gentlemen to try their own consciences, whether that they would be content that they should be intreated (if God had made them husbandmen and labourers of the ground) as they have intreated, and presently do intreat, such as sometimes had a moderate and reasonable life under their predecessors ; whether (we say) that they

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would be content that their tenements and rents should be raised from rent to rent, from one farm to two, and so going upward, till that for poverty the ancient labourers are compelled to leave the ground in the hands of the lord—if, with this intreatment, they would be content, we appeal to their own consciences. And if they think that they would not, then, in God's name, we require them to begin to reform themselves, and to remember that it is not we, but that it is Christ Jesus who so craveth of them. And unto the same rule we send judges, lawyers, merchants, artificers, and, finally, even the very labourers of the ground themselves, that every one in his own vocation may try how justly, uprightly and mercifully he dealeth with his neighbour."

There is, of course, much in the *Book of Discipline* that has lost interest for most of us, but the chapter on schools and colleges is excellent. It is, according

Education

to Principal Lee, mainly the production of Winram, sub-prior of St. Andrews, and Douglas, the principal of St. Mary's College. Seeing men are born ignorant and cannot be instructed by a miracle, the Government is "to be most cairfull for the virtuous educatioun, and godlie upbringing of the youth of this Realme." There is to be a teacher in every parish. All those with an aptitude for learning should be sent to the university, and no father of whatever estate or condition must use his children of his "awin fantasie, especiallie in thair youth-heade," but must as far as possible at his own expense dedicate his sons "to the proffit of the Church and to the Commonwealth." All children rich or poor "apt to letteris and learnyng" must devote themselves to study and be supported in pursuing it. The training was to be somewhat prolonged. Three or four years at grammar, then other four years at logic, rhetoric and

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Greek would take one to the university, where in three years he might become an M.A. "From the time of laureation in philosophy, five years more," according to Principal Lee,¹ "were required for qualifying a man for any of the liberal professions." Nor was one allowed to pass from one stage to another without bringing testimonials of proficiency in his previous studies. Subjects, moreover, were not to be grouped, but there was to be a separate professor for every distinct branch of learning. The rents of bishoprics and collegiate churches were to be appropriated for these purposes of higher education. The chapter concludes by reminding them, "yf God shall grant quietnes, and gif your Wisdomes grace, to set fordward letteris in the sort prescribed, ye shall leave wisdome and learnyng to your posteritie, ane treasure more to be esteemed than ony earthlie treasure ye ar abill to provide for thame :

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, vol. i. 196.

Discipline

whiche without wisdom, ar more abill to be thair ruine and confusioun, than help or comfort."

The chapter on Discipline is severe and suggests the Old Testament. Blasphemy, adultery, murder and perjury demand death. The Church by its censures will punish drunkenness, "excesse (be it in apparell or be it in eating and drinking)," fornication, oppression of the poor by exactions, "deceaving of thame in buying or selling be wrong met or measure," wanton words and licentious living. One is not, unless a member of the family, to have any kind of intercourse with a person under a sentence of excommunication either in eating or drinking, buying or selling, "yea, in saluting or talking with him." "It would have been well," writes Lee,¹ "if churchmen in this country had always acted on the principle of abiding steadfastly by their spiritual

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 203.

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function without incessantly imploring, as they did, the civil magistrate to assist, maintain, and fortify the discipline of the Church, by the imposition of such civil pains and penalties as fine and imprisonment, banishment, infamy, and even death. . . . It must be remembered also," he adds,¹ "that their claims of jurisdiction were not confined to the members of their own communion. Every living soul within the realm must either conform to the same profession, and practise the same worship, and submit to the same discipline, or undergo the vengeance of the law. . . . A gentleman would not be allowed to educate his child unless the Church approved of the choice of a pedagogue. A stripling or a girl of the examinable age must either communicate in the parish church, or else pay a fine according to the rank of the party. . . . These were powers actually granted to presbyteries, who had a right

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 204.

Conduct of Clergy

to crave, receive, and pursue for the penalties."

Elders were to be elected once a year by the vote of the people, and were eligible for re-election. The ministers were to live according to their stipends, "for as excesse and superfluitie is nocht tolerabill in ane minister, so is avarice and the cairfull sollicitude of money and geir utterlie to be damned in Christis servandis, and especialie in those that are fed upoun the charge of the Church. We judge it unseamlie, and not tolerabill, that ministeris shall be burdeit in common aill-houses or tavernis. Neather yit must ane minister be permittit to frequent and commonlie hant the Court."

There was considerable latitude allowed in conducting service. The Word must be faithfully preached, Sacraments rightly administered, and common prayers publicly made, but in everything else there was liberty. In large towns there should

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every day be sermon or prayers, with reading of Scripture, care being taken that the people do not come as superstitiously to the prayers as they did to the mass. In smaller towns there should be service on one day besides the Sunday, and every one must be free from labour to attend. The book avoids the term Sabbath in referring to the first day of the week. It is recommended that baptism be administered after the sermon to remove the gross error that "children be dampned" if they die without it. Marriages are in church, and on Sunday before sermon. Four times a year is considered often enough for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and, to discourage superstition, it should not be observed at seasons like Easter. It is expected that every one joining the Church should be able to repeat the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.

The Exercise

The Scriptures should be read through in order, and the preaching should be equally methodical. "For this skipping and divagatioun frome place to place of the Scripture, be it in reiding, or be it in precheing, we judge not so profitabill to edifie the Church, as the continewall following of ane text."

The Exercise should be held in every town once a week, to which all educated people are invited for the study of Scripture. One was appointed to open the discussion and another to add, but every one might contribute for mutual edification. Out of these meetings the presbyteries are said to have originated. The rules laid down for conducting them are excellent. "In exhortationes or admonitions," it is said, "he must be schorte, that the tyme may be spent in oppenyng of the mynd of the Holy Ghost in that place: in following the fyle¹ and depend-

¹ Thread.

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ence of the text, and in observing suche notes as may instruct and edifie the auditor. For avoyding of contentioun, neather may the interpretour; neather yit any of the assemblie, move any questioun in oppen audience, whairto himself is not content to geve resolutioun without reasoning with any other; but everie man ought to speik his owin judgement to the edificatioun of the Church." There must be no shirking of the Exercise on the part of properly qualified persons. One may proceed by way of discipline against them: "For no man may be permitted to leave as best pleaseth him within the Church of God; but everie man must be constrayned, by fraternall admonitioun and correctioun, to bestow his laubouris, when of the Church thei ar required, to the edificatioun of otheris."

The chapter on funerals may prove a surprise to some. Prayers for the dead are, of course, condemned, but so are singing

Funerals

and reading, lest people might imagine that they would be not only useful to admonish the living, but profitable also for the departed. "And thairfoir," it is said, "we think most expedient that the dead be convayed to the place of buriall with some honest cumpany of the Church, without either singing or reading; yea, without all kynd of ceremony heirtofore used, uther than that the dead be committed to the grave, with suche gravitie and sobrietie as those that be present may seame to, fear the judgmentis of God, and to hate synne, whiche is the caus of death." It was not necessary by any ceremony to deepen the feeling of the people towards death. They took it seriously enough. "The Queene," writes Calderwood,¹ with reference to Darnley's murder, "according to an ancient custome, sould have kepted herself fourtie dayes within, and the doars and windowes sould

¹ *History of Reformation*, ii. 347.

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have been closed in token of mourning ; but the windowes were opened, to lett in light, within the fourth day." The book is strongly against the preaching of funeral sermons. They are unnecessary, and are apt to encourage superstition, but, worst of all, the ministers would be constantly occupied with them, "or ellis thei shall have respect to personis, preaching at the buriall of the rich and honorabill, but keeping silence when the poor or dyspised departeth ; and this with saif conscience cannot the ministeris do." There should be no burial in churches, and the Assembly afterwards enjoined that the body should be committed to at least six feet of earth. In the *Book of Common Order*, adapted for the regulation of funerals and marriages in 1562, there is no burial service, but it is suggested that if it is felt proper, they may proceed to the nearest church and listen to a sermon suitable to the occasion. The Directory for Public Worship,

A 'Devout Imagination'

approved in 1645, is on this subject in harmony with the Book of Discipline. In conclusion, it urges their Honours to carry out its injunctions, but if not, it reminds them that it will remain as a monument and a witness against them "how lovinglie God called you and this Realme to repentance, what counsellaires God sent unto you, and how ye have used the same."

Many of the nobles subscribed their agreement with the ecclesiastical polity of the Reformers, but Lethington scoffed at it as a "devout imagination," and it never received the consent either of the Estates or the Crown. It is well, however, that our old men should dream such dreams, for they help posterity to see visions, and this ideal of Knox has moved like a pillar of fire before the people of Scotland. "The modern phrase 'Christian Socialism,'" writes Professor Hume Brown,¹

¹ *Life of Knox*, ii. 149.

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“would be no inapt description of the scheme it embodies. In all its proposals the individual is merged in the society with a completeness that would meet the approval of the most absolute socialist of the present day. By the combined authority of Church and State he was to be sent to school and university till his special talent was discovered by which he could best serve the community. His career, thus marked out for him by his subsequent conduct and opinions, must be shaped in accordance with the creed and discipline of the Church. Those who fell out of the race were to be forcibly reminded that they were not their own masters. The unable were to be the care of their respective parishes, and the able-bodied, but idle, should be compelled to put their hands to such work as was provided for them. Community of goods is not proposed, but for this there was an excellent reason. As one of the tenets

Christian Socialism

of the Anabaptists, it had been discredited in the deplorable history of that sect in Germany and elsewhere. Moreover, if the ecclesiastical system of the Book of Discipline had been fully realised, such regulation of property would hardly have been necessary. In the parish, as the unit of society, it would have been the function of the Church to see that there was no excessive luxury on the one hand, and no absolute need on the other. Ministers, elders, and deacons, if they did their duty, would constitute an authority which would enforce the principle of Christian charity. Alike as regards property and life, therefore, the scheme of the Scottish Reformers was practically a form of socialism such as seems implied in the very essence of the Christian teaching." I do not think this by any means a fanciful representation of Knox's position. He would have scoffed at the modern doctrine about the liberty of the subject, because in the

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case of many it signifies only liberty to suffer and starve. It is for this reason repugnant to morality, but Knox was not indifferent to freedom, and would never have tolerated a system where he was in subjection to any rule except the divine law. It is thus that one may be impelled even to socialism in order to realise liberty.

CHAPTER VII

MARY AND KNOX

ONE is not surprised at the attitude of the Estates towards these proposals. Knox was soon, indeed, to find himself face to face with a reaction that tried all his strength. Mary, on the death of her husband, returned to Scotland, and was duly welcomed as Queen, but her presence threw the whole country into contention. One cannot help having much sympathy, and even some respect for her, but she found herself from the first in a false position. She came as a Papist to be the sovereign of a country that had just condemned the mass as idolatry, and therefore to be punished with death. She

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told the people frankly that she would not change her religion. Knox naturally looked on her with grave suspicion, because she threatened to restore Romanism, and she would have been forced to do so. She had, in fact, signed documents at her marriage in 1558 under the influence of her uncles, the Guises, that were in the opinion of a friendly historian like Mr. Lang,¹ simply "infamous." If she died without issue, she left the crown of Scotland to the King of France, with all her rights to the crown of England. She declared her assent to the Scottish articles of no effect, and bound Scotland to the extent of a million to France for expenses in defending the country. She came with a reputation tarnished by rumours of immorality, and yet on landing she captivated the hearts of all indifferent to the Reformation. She was clever, accomplished, and not only beautiful beyond

¹ *History of Scotland*, ii. 39.

Influence of Mary

her portraits, but with a fascination that no artist can express. "For Mary," writes Mr. Lang,¹ "men poured out their lives like water. She was more to them than a woman: she was a religion, an ideal. But Fate from her cradle lay so heavy upon her that no conceivable conduct of hers could have steered her safely through the plotting crowns and creeds, the rival dissemblers, bigots, hypocrites and ruffians who, with jealousy and hatred and desire, on every side surrounded her. Joyous by nature and by virtue of her youth, she was condemned to a life of tears, and destined to leave a stained and contested honour." We may well sympathise with the Queen, but must not withhold our admiration from Knox. His position was rendered exceedingly difficult by her popularity, and if he had yielded, like the time-serving courtiers and fickle multitude, to her bland-

¹ *History of Scotland*, ii. 40.

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ishments, it would have meant serious consequences to Scotland and humanity. He was not naturally austere, but he set his face like a flint to resist, in the cause of God, the subtle seductions of the young Queen. The weather at her arrival on August 19, 1561, must have suited his humour. "The sun," he writes,¹ "was not seyn to schyne two dayis befor, nor two dayis after. That foir-warning gave God unto us, but allace! the most pairt war blynd." She met with a great reception from the citizens. Fires burned all night, and a company with instruments of music "geve thair salutationis at hir chalmer wyndo. The melody (as sche alledged) lyked hir weill." All this joy passed, however, and on Sunday came the mass in the Chapel Royal. Many, like the Master of Lindsay, were indignant, but the Lord James warded the door and his brothers protected the priest. An Act of

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 269.

The Mass

toleration was proclaimed at the Market Cross on Monday, but only the Earl of Arran protested against it, and he did so on the ground that God had said the idolater must die. The nobles suddenly became reasonable, and felt themselves bound to respect scruples of conscience. Knox rose to the occasion next Sunday. He was sure of his ground, and felt that the plagues of God would descend upon them for their defection. "One mass," he said,¹ "was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed on any part of the Realm on purpose to suppress the whole religion." The "guydaris of the Court" mocked him, and resented his remarks as "a verray untimelie admonitioun." Knox felt that he had been too moderate, and afterwards blamed himself for restraining the people, for having "traveled rather to mitigat, yea, to slokin that fervencye

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 276.

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that God had kyndled in otheris." Knox was summoned to Court, and had the first of several disputations with the Queen. He was accused of rebellion against her mother and herself, while he had also written a book against the government of states by women. It was even suggested that he used necromancy. Knox reminded Mary that he had only been faithful to God. As for his book, it contained his opinions, but learned men in all ages had been free to express their ideas, and if the people were satisfied with the "regiment of women," he would readily acquiesce in it, and live as peaceably under her as Paul did under Nero. It was also said that he encouraged subjects to adopt a religion forbidden by their princes. Mary laid claim to absolute submission by divine right. Knox overwhelmed her by references to Scripture where subjects resolved in religion to obey God rather than man. There were

Divine Right

the Israelites under Pharaoh, Daniel under Nebuchadnezzar, and the tradition was continued by the early Christians under the Roman emperors. "And so, Madam," he concludes, "ye may perceave that subjectis ar not bound to the religioun of thair princes." In none of the cases cited, however, had there been active rebellion. "Might subjects," asked the Queen, "resist with the sword?" "Yf thair princes exceed thair boundis (quod he),¹ Madam, and do against that whairfoir they should be obeyed, it is no doubt but thei may be resisted, even by power." Mary was silent for a quarter of an hour—struck dumb with astonishment—then she managed to say that evidently her subjects were to obey Knox. "God forbid (answered he) that ever I taik upoun me to command any to obey me, or yitt to set subjectis at libertie to do what pleaseth thame. Bot my travell is

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 282.

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that boyth princes and subjectis obey God." It would have been well if this controversy had ended with this dignified protest, but they proceeded to discuss religion. "I will defend the Kirk of Rome," said the Queen, "for I think it is the treu Kirk of God." Knox laboured in the coarse language of the age to prove that it was corrupt. "My conscience," interrupted Mary, "is nott so." "Conscience, Madam," replied Knox somewhat rudely, "requyres knowledge: and I fear that rycht knowledge ye have none." The Queen retorted that she had both read and heard, with the result that doctors so differed about the interpretation of Scripture that a poor woman sometimes hardly knew what to believe. Knox was too dogmatic to sympathise with her, and insisted, "Ye shall beleve God, that planelie speaketh in His Word: and farther than the Word teaches you, ye neather shall beleve the ane or the other.

The Word of God

The Word of God is plane in the self; and yf thair appear any obscuritie in one place the Holy Ghost, whiche is never contrariouse to Himself, explanes the same more clearlie in other places: so that thair can remane no doubt, but unto suche as obstinatlie remane ignorant." We have here Knox's view of Scripture, and it is sufficiently absurd in the light of experience. The New Testament, as a matter of fact, is frequently, not merely on theological, but even on practical matters, in flat contradiction to the Old. One sympathises with Mary, and is reminded how often the advocates of a good movement support it by bad arguments. Knox, in spite of his invincible dogmatism, went off with a certain dignity, saying: "I pray God, Madam, that ye may be as blessed within the commounwealth of Scotland, yf it be the pleasur of God, as ever Debora was in the commounwealth of Israell."

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This discussion somewhat fluttered the dove-cots, but Knox was not favourably impressed by it. It was thus in confidence he summed up Mary: "Yf thair be not in hir a proud mynd, a crafty witt, and ane indurat hearte against God and His treuth my judgment faileth me."¹

The Queen set out to visit the large towns of Scotland, and was received with insults and pageants. The magistrates of Edinburgh ordered all "mess-mongares" and other wicked persons out of the city within forty-eight hours. Mary declared, on the contrary, that it should be open to all the lieges. "In presence of hir Counsall," writes Knox,² "sche kept hir self very grave (for under the dule wead sche could play the hypocryte to full perfection); but how soon that ever hir French fillockis,³ fydlaris, and others of that band, gatt the house allone, thair mycht be seane skipping not very cumlie for honest women."

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 286.

² *Ibid.* ii. 294.

³ Giddy girls.

Spiritual Independence

The Lords and the Clergy now seldom agreed. Lethington led the one and Knox the other. The right of the Church to hold conventions was raised at the third General Assembly. Lethington maintained that they must for such meetings get the consent of the Queen. This was manifestly preposterous, and the answer was soon given, that if they were dependent for such matters on the royal will the Church would cease to exist. "Tack from us," said Knox,¹ "the fredome of Assemblies, and tack from us the Evangell; for without Assemblies, how shall good ordour and unitie in doctrine be kept." The claim for spiritual independence is thus absolute. A demand was also made that a proper provision should be secured for the ministers. It was a question of dividing the remaining third, after the two-thirds compensation given to the old incumbents. One proposed that it should

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 296.

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be shared between the Court and the Church. This arrangement led Knox to exclaim :¹ " Weill, yf the end of this ordour, pretended to be tacken for the sustentation of the ministers, be happy, my judgment failleth me. . . . I see twa partis freely gevin to the Devill, and the third maun be divided betwix God and the Devill . . . or it be long the Devill shall have three partis of the third : and judge you then, what Goddis portioun shall be." Lethington's answer was : " The ministeris being susteained, the Queene will not gatt at the yearis end to by hir a pair of new shoes." It was a subject that sorely exercised the Assemblies, and Knox is very satirical over it. He believed neither in a mendicant clergy nor in voluntary support. Some of the stipends were very small, and seem smaller from the modern depreciation of money. They varied from a hundred to three hundred merks. Knox received

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 310.

Stipends

four hundred as minister of St. Giles. The true value of this sum, according to Principal Lee,¹ was £44:9s. English money; but its equivalent in 1800 has been calculated at £562, or perhaps about £700 at the present day. A Lord of Session had then a smaller salary than Knox. The Principal of Glasgow College had only the half of it, and few ministers had any more. He received in consideration of his services another and a larger salary in 1567, and when he went to St. Andrews lived in a house that became the archiepiscopal palace, so that Knox, with all his evangelical fervour, had no favour for apostolic mendicity. This sharing of the thirds with the Queen was often the occasion of strife. Lethington addressed the clergy as if they were her pensioners, and reproached them for their want of gratitude. It was insolence. Knox must have made him feel foolish when he

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 357.

John Knox

retorted, that it certainly behoved those receiving her gifts to be thankful for them, adding: "I am assured that neither thrid nor twa part ever apperteaned to any of hir predecessouris within this Realme these thousand yearis bypast, neather yitt hes the Quene bettir title to that whiche sche usurpes, be it in geving to otheris, or in tackin to hir self, then such as crucified Jesus Christ had to devide his garmentis amonges thame. . . . Lett the Papistes, who have the twa partis, some that have their thriddis free (such as Moray), and some that have gotten abbacies and few landis thank the Queen. . . . These words," he tells us, "war judged proud and intollerable, and engendered no small displeasur to the speakar."¹

A supplication was drawn up by the Assembly to the Queen and her Privy Council, remonstrating about the celebration of mass, and asking the punishment of

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 312.

Dancing

death for adultery and blasphemy, calling attention to the condition of the poor, and urging them to make proper provision for the clergy. Lethington was scandalised at the language of the petition, and promised to recast it. He did so, with the result that Mary, on reading it, said, "Here ar many fair wordis; I can not tell what the heartis ar." "And so for our paynted oratorye," writes Knox,¹ "we war termed the nixt name to flatteraris and dissemblaris."

In December 1562 Knox heard bad news from France about the persecution of the Protestants by the Guises, and his worst suspicions were confirmed by the dances in Holyrood House. He denounced them from the pulpit, and was summoned to Court. A garbled and exaggerated account had been given of the sermon. Knox was angry and spoke plain. "Yf thair be into you," he said,²

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 345.

² *Ibid.* ii. 332.

John Knox

“any sparckle of the Spreit of God, yea of honestie or wisdom, ye could not justlie have bene offended with anything that I spack.” Though dancing may be “the jesture rather of those that ar mad and in phrenesye then of sober men,” yet he will not condemn it so long as one does not waste his time over it or dance at the sufferings of God’s people. He professed himself willing at all times to serve the Queen, but he would not complain to her of such matters in private. “I am called, Madam,” he said,¹ “to ane publict functioun within the Kirk of God, and am appointed by God to rebuk the synnes and vices of all. . . . But to waitt upoun your chalmer-door or ellis whair, and then to have no farther libertie but to whisper my mynd in your Grace’s eare, or to tell to you what otheris think and speak of you, neather will my conscience nor the vocation whairto God hath called me suffer it.” He

¹ Knox’s *Works*, ii. 334.

Popular Supremacy

reminded her that even now he should have been at his books, and went off to the consternation of the courtiers with "a reasonable meary¹ countenance."

The next interview was at Lochleven Castle. It was about the Easter of the following year, 1563. The Protestants in the West threatened, if the Court would not interfere, to take the law against the Romanists into their own hands. The Queen was indignant, and thought it judicious to call in the assistance of Knox, but he was not to be used for such a purpose. They had a discussion of two hours on the subject before supper. Mary was evidently convinced that reason was on her side, and that nothing could excuse such conduct on the part of citizens. Knox objected, and maintained that if the rulers failed in their duty the people must step into the breach. He overwhelmed the Queen by precedents from the Old Testament.

¹ Merry.

John Knox

“Samuell,” he said, “feared not to slay Agag, the fat and delicate King of Amalech, whom King Saule had saved. Neather spared Helias Jesabellis fals propheittis, and Baallis preastis, albeit that King Achab was present. . . . And so your Majestie may see,” he continued,¹ “that otheris then cheaf magistrattis may lauchfullie punishe, and hes punished, the vices and crymes that God commandis to be punished.” The Queen was baffled, and went to supper. She changed her attitude next morning, and was most gracious, but made no reference to the subject of discussion, except to say on his departure: “I sall caus summond all offendaris, and ye shall know that I shall minister justice.” It was the favour of Knox she desired to obtain, and by her affability she got it, perhaps, even more than he would have been willing to allow.

(It was about this time that Knox, in his fifty-ninth year, thought of again getting

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 372.

Second Marriage

married, and his fancy fell on a daughter of Lord Ochiltree, aged seventeen. People spoke about enchantments, but the fascination seems to have been natural. The young lady proved a good enough wife to him, and after his death united herself to Ker of Faudonside, who is said to have presented a pistol at the Queen during the murder of Rizzio. His enemies found their opportunity in this marriage, and took a delight in describing his homecoming, "not like ane prophet or ane auld decrepit priest, as he was, bot lyk as he had bene ane of thi blude royal, with his bendes of taffetie feschnit¹ with golden ringis and precious stanes."²

The Parliament met in May 1563, and gave great offence to Knox. The Queen evidently looked her best, and was well supported by the ladies of the Court. "Such styncken pryde of wemen," writes Knox, "as was sein at that Parliament,

¹ Fastened.

² M'Crie's *Life* (Notes), 394.

John Knox

was never sein befoir in Scotland." The Queen made a speech, and the courtiers heard in it the voice of a goddess. "God save," said one, "that sweat face!" "Was thair ever," said another, "oratour spack sa properlie and sa sweetlie!" The preachers were angry. They denounced the ladies for "the tarejattung of thair taillies" (tassels on their gowns), and the rest of their vanity. It was enough to call down the vengeance of Heaven, and so "articles war presented for ordour to be taken for apperall, and for reformatioun of other enormities, but all was scrippied (sneered) at."¹ Knox felt it necessary to deliver his soul, and dwelt on the obvious reaction against the Protestant religion. A marriage had been talked about with Don Carlos, and he ended by denouncing it. One is not surprised that he should have done so, for it threatened to undermine the work of his life. "Whensoever," he said,² "the

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 381.

² *Ibid.* ii. 385.

The Queen in Tears

Nobilitie of Scotland, professing the Lord Jesus, consentis that ane infidell (and all Papistis are infidellis) shalbe head to your Soverane, ye do as far as in ye lyath to banishe Jesus Christ from this Realme." The sermon was very badly received by Protestants as well as by Papists, and resented even by "his most familiaris." He was forthwith summoned to the Court. The Queen was naturally in a rage; "skarslie could Marnock, hir secrekt chalmer-boy, gett neapkynes to hold her eyes drye for the tearis; and the owling, besydes womanlie weaping, stayed hir-speiche." ¹

Knox waited, and after "the first fume" awkwardly apologised for any annoyance given her. "Without the preaching place, Madam," he said, ² "I think few have occasion to be offendit at me; and thair, Madam, I am nott maister of my self, but man obey Him who commandis me to

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 387.

² *Ibid.* ii. 387.

John Knox

speik plane, and to flatter no flesche upoun the face of the earth."

The Queen was not to be mollified. She asked him sharply what he had to do with her marriage, and who was he to interfere with the affairs of the Commonwealth. Knox was not to be intimidated, and replied instantly:¹ "A subject borne within the same, Madam! And albeit I neather be erle, lord, nor barroun within it, yitt hes God maid me (how abject that ever I be in your eyes), a profitable member within the same: Yea, Madam, to me it apperteanes no lesse to foirwarne of such thingis as may hurte it, yf I foirsee thame, then it does to any of the Nobilitie; for boyth my vocation and conscience craves playness of me." It was certainly well spoken, but badly taken. "Owling was heard." Knox again apologised and deplored her grief, but concluded, "I man sustean (albeit unwillinglie) your Majesties

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 388.

Circular Letter

tearis, rather then I dar hurte my conscience, or betray my Commounwealth through my silence."¹ He was ordered out of the Cabinet to wait the Queen's pleasure, and the courtiers looked at him askance, but he used the opportunity to remind the fair ladies sitting in their "gorgiouse apparell" that the world passes away, and in the end "the seally sowll, I fear," he added, "shalbe so feeble, that it can neather cary with it gold, garnassing, targatting, pearle, nor pretious stanes."²

A more serious affair happened a few months afterwards. The Queen had gone to Stirling, and the servants of the Court had been specially ostentatious with their mass. A riot ensued, and two Protestants were accused. Knox issued a circular letter urging the brethren to support them by their presence at the trial. This was condemned as treason. He was commanded to appear before the Council.

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 389.

² *Ibid.* ii. 389.

John Knox

The meeting was held in the middle of December 1563. The Queen felt certain that the case would go against him. The peers were all there, sitting the one opposite the other. "Thingis thus put in ordour, the Quene cam furth, and with no littill warldlie pomp, wes placeit in the chyre. . . . Hir pomp lackit one principale point, to wit, womanlie gravitie, for when sche saw John Knox standing at the uther end of the tabill, bair-heided, sche first smyleit, and efter gaif ane gawf lauchter. . . . 'This is ane gude begyning,' sche said: 'But wat ye whairat I lauch? Yon man gart me greit, and grat never teir him self: I will see gif I can gar him greit.'"¹

Lethington prosecuted for the Queen. He asked Knox if he did not regret sending the letter, but he protested that he was not aware of having done anything amiss. His conduct was not

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 404.

Case Dismissed

without precedent, and had often met with their consent in former times. It was then all right when the Devil came in the form of open tyranny, but now it is all wrong when he comes under the cloak of justice. The Queen thought this trifling, and considered it enough to prove that he had convoked the lieges. Ruthven demurred, and maintained that it was his business to do so for prayer and sermon. The law was on his side, and after some parrying Knox boldly defended his position. "Ye forget your self," said one, "ye ar not now in the pulpit." "I am in the place," said the other,¹ "quhair I am demandit of conscience to, speik the treuth: and thairfair the treuth I speik, impung it quhoso list." The case was dismissed. "That nicht," we read,² "wes nether danging nor fyddilling in the Courte." Knox was not content to escape punishment for his circular, he demanded and

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 408.

² *Ibid.* ii. 412.

John Knox

received for it the approval of next Assembly. He had now fairly broken with the Queen and lost all respect for her. The palace, according to his history, is a perfect sink of immorality. "What bruit the Maries and the rest of the dansaris of the Courte had the ballattis of that aige did witness, quhilk we for modesteis sake omit."¹

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 416.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIGHTS OF THE QUEEN AND THE PATRIMONY OF THE KIRK

LETHINGTON was angry with the clergy, and vowed to wash his hands of them. "Lat thame bark and blaw," said he, "alse loude as thay list." Sinners, it was contended, were not charitably handled. One should not preach at individuals, but should deal in generalities. If they would escape such censure, however, they must be ashamed publicly to offend. The Church had thus to contend not only against Romanists, but against others who had once "bene esteemed the chieff pyllaris of the Kirk within the Realme." There was now

John Knox

a bitter feud between the Protestant courtiers and the ministers. It was denied that the mass was idolatry. Knox thundered from St. Giles against this defection, but Lethington went off with a sneer, saying, "We must recant, and burne oure bill ; for the preachouris ar angrie."

The General Assembly met in June 1564. The conflict here reached a crisis, and a Conference was proposed by the Protestant courtiers, among whom was the Earl of Moray. The Assembly at first refused to divide itself by sending a deputation, but yielded on condition that they came to no conclusion without the knowledge and advice of all the brethren. The discussion turned on the conduct of Knox, and it was opened by Lethington. He began with great tact to suggest that the Reformer should moderate his references to the Queen lest others might, by his example, be induced to "imitate the lyke libertie, albeit nocht with the same

Condition of Society

modestie and foirsycht." The compliment was thrown away upon Knox, and he probably considered it an insult to attempt by such a silly device to deceive him. The state of the country was serious. Idolatry was maintained, the servants of God were despised, wicked men were in honour and authority, while vice and impiety passed unpunished. It was enough, in the opinion of Knox, to call down the vengeance of Heaven on the community. Lethington protested and challenged him to prove that the sins of princes are visited on the people. The appeal was of course to Scripture, but he might have got it from experience. Knox quoted Manasseh, but remembered that the people generally acquiesced in the iniquity of their princes ; "even as hoill Scotland," he¹ added, "is guiltie this day of the Queenis idolatrie, and ye, my Lordis, speciallie above all utheris."

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 427.

John Knox

Lethington returned to his attacks on the Queen. The opposition of Knox to her religion is beyond measure. He calls her the slave of Satan, and maintains that her impiety invokes judgment. The Master of Maxwell could not repress his indignation, and wondered that the Queen endured such remarks. Knox protested against their perversions of his preaching, and quoted his prayer for the conversion of Her Majesty. He dared them to find fault with it, but Lethington took exception to the phrase, "Illuminat hir hairt, gif thy gude plesour be." It was not after this hesitating fashion that the prophets prayed, but it was, according to Knox, the rule of the Gospel to ask according to the Divine Will. The doubt about her conversion, he continued, arose from her own rebellion. Lethington reminded him that she believed her own to be "goode religioun." Knox replied,¹ so did the

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 429.

Lethington and Knox

worshippers of Moloch, and so do the Turks. After some more brilliant fencing, in which Knox referred to Peter's prayer for Simon Magus, where he inserted the condition "if it be possible," he asked when would the Queen for her enlightenment ever be present at public preaching? Lethington got in a home thrust with the reply, "I think nevir so lang as sche is thus intreitit."

The Secretary now invites Knox to quote his authority for speaking of the Queen as a bond slave of Satan. It is, according to him, the condition of all men out of Christ. Lethington objects to the statement as too general, and demands where the prophets treated kings and queens as Knox does Mary. He answers,¹ "In more placeis than ane," and instances Elijah against Ahab and Jezebel. Lethington, with great adroitness, suggests that "thay wer singular motiounis of the Spreit of God, and appertene nothing to

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 432.

John Knox

this our aige." It would not do. Knox quotes Elisha against Jehoram, and Jeremiah against the kings of Judah. The latter in public sermons addresses the rulers of his country and warns them of their miserable ending. It is all the more necessary to deal specially with them because, Knox¹ adds, "thair synnis be moir noisum to the Commonwealth, than are the synnis of inferiour persounis."

Lethington felt worsted and confessed himself weary. After a brief rest, he resumed the discussion on a recent exposition by Knox of Romans xiii. There were two points in it to which he took exception: (1) The difference drawn between the ordinance of God and the persons placed in authority; men might refuse the persons and yet not violate the ordinance; and (2) subjects might resist their princes if they, by their commands, transgress the law. Knox admitted that

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 434.

Lex Rex

the Secretary had rightly apprehended his doctrine. Rulers are appointed for a certain purpose, and if they fail to discharge the duties of their office *ipso facto* they cease to be rulers. The people rescued Jonathan from the rash vow of Saul. Doeg obeyed Saul in killing the priests, but he is condemned in Psalm lii. as guilty of a most cruel murder. Lethington admits that he would not kill John Knox at the command of the Queen because she was offended at him, but if any one else consented to do so he was not certain that he would interfere to prevent it. Knox at once made the natural and crushing retort, "Gif God hes giffin unto you sik ane power and credyt as mycht deliver me, and yit sufferit me to perisch, that in so doing ye sould be cryminall and gyltie of my blude." "Prove that," answered Lethington,¹ "and win the play."

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 438.

John Knox

Knox again produces Jeremiah. The prophet warned the princes that by putting him to death they would bring on themselves innocent blood. Lethington failed to see the analogy for (1) the king had not condemned him to death ; and (2) he was accused without "ane caus." Knox replies that though the princes and some of the people defended him, yet Jeremiah held the whole community would be responsible if he were put to death ; and that Jehovah, according to Ezekiel, poured out His indignation upon Israel because there was not found one man to stand in the gap. Lethington thereupon asks him if he thinks subjects should control their princes. "And what harm," said the other, "soulde the Commounwelth ressaif, gif that the corrupt effectiounis off ignorant reuleris wer moderatit, and so brydillit be the wisdome and discretioun of godlie subjectis, that thai soulde do wrang nor violence to no man ?" ¹

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 440.

No Toleration

The Secretary protested against this statement as irrelevant. The Queen did not propose to attack the Protestants. "Oure question is," he continued, "whidder that we may and aucht to suppress the Quenis messe? Or whidder hir idolatrie salbe laid to our chairge?" Knox answered that the Scripture had already settled the matter by declaring that the idolater must die. Lethington does not deny it, but wants to know by whom he is to be punished, and the answer is straightway given, "Be the peopil of God." The Secretary maintains that the most famous men in Europe would reject such a statement. Whereupon he reads from Luther, Melanchthon, Bucer and Calvin a refutation of it, adding, "The gathering of these things hes caist moir travell, than I tuik this sevin yearis in reiding of anie commentareis."¹ Knox tells him that it has been labour lost, since two of his witnesses are writing against

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 442.

John Knox

the Anabaptists for repudiating all magistrates, while the others refer to Christian subjects with no power except tears against their infidel oppressors. God only asked Abraham to refrain from idolatry because he was unable to overthrow it, but his injunction to the Israelites was to extirpate it. This was analogous to the position of the Protestants in Scotland against the Romanists. Knox cites the example of Jehu against Ahab and Jezebel. Lethington objects that he was a king, but Knox reminds him he was then a subject. The Secretary now insists that it was an exception and done at the express command of God. Knox replies that the injunction against idolatry is perpetual. It would be tedious and unprofitable to mention all the cases drawn by Knox from the Old Testament in favour of his position. Lethington continued to feebly carp against them, but, feeling himself in a corner, confessed that

God and the People

he was at a loss to realise their conclusions. They were forthwith given in order by Knox¹:—

“(1) That subjectis haif delyverit ane innocent frome the handis of thair king, and thairintill offendit nocht God.

“(2) That subjectis haif refuseit to strike innocentis whan ane king commandit, and in so doing denyit no just obedience.

“(3) That sik as struck at the commandiment of the king befor God wer reputed murtheraris.

“(4) That God hes nocht onlie of ane subject maid ane king, but also hes airmit subjectis aganis thair naturall kings, and commandit thame to tak vengeance upoun thame according to His law.

“(5) And last, That Godis pepill hes executit Godis law aganis thair king, having no farther regaird to him in that behalf, than gif he had bene the moist simpill subject within this Realme.”

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 453.

John Knox

The conclusion of Knox, therefore, is that the people of God, if they have the power, are bound to put down all crimes against the divine law. Lethington thinks that few learned men will agree with him. Knox thereupon for confirmation hands him the Apology of Magdeburg, with the names of its ministers affirming the doctrine, "That to resist ane tyrant is not to resist God, nor yit His ordinance." Lethington returned it, and said, with a sneer, "*Homines obscuri*," to which Knox answered, "*Dei tamen servi*," and the discussion ended. The Conference came to nothing. One suggested that Knox should take the mind of Calvin. It would have been a waste of time, for he already knew the position of the Reformer. It would be better for some of his opponents to make a complaint about his teaching. They would thus, without any suspicion of influence, get the opinion of Calvin. It was not done, but after this futile contro-

Conspiracy of Courtiers

versy "the mynisteris that wer callit preceissit, wer haldin of all the courteouris as monstouris," and the Earl of Moray ceased for a time to have any communication with Knox.

Things seemed then at their worst for Protestantism, but they speedily began to mend through the folly and wickedness of the Queen. It is said that Elizabeth entangled Mary into the marriage with Darnley. She alienated by it her best friends, and he was not worthy of her. He was a fool, and she engaged herself to him, July 27, 1565, against the wishes of nobles like Moray and Argyle. They fled to England. Darnley soon lost favour, and Rizzio became indispensable to the Queen. This roused the jealousy of her husband. Lethington began to plot, and a conspiracy was formed. Darnley was the centre of it, but associated with him were some of the best of the nobles. Rizzio was stabbed March 9, 1566, and

John Knox

her son was born in the Castle June 19. Mary henceforth loathed Darnley, and was resolved to get rid of him. In eight months, February 9, 1567, he was found dead in the Kirk of Field. The blame of the murder fell chiefly on Bothwell, but Morton and Lethington had also compromised themselves by it. The Queen had previously tried in the teeth of an Act of Parliament to restore Archbishop Hamilton to his consistorial jurisdiction, in order that Bothwell might through him get a divorce, but the Kirk protested and she had to surrender. Mary, helped by Bothwell, henceforth discredits herself in the eyes of all decent people. She met a hostile army on June 15 at Carberry Hill. Bothwell fled, and she entered Edinburgh amid the execrations of the people. "When she came to the rere-guarde," writes Calderwood¹ "all cried out to burne the murtherer of her husband.

¹ *History of Kirk of Scotland*, ii. 365.

Carberry Hill

An ensigne was caried before her where-soever she went by two men, stented betwixt two speeres, wherein was painted her husband lying dead under a tree, and beside him her young sonne at his head, heaving up his hands, and above his head these words : ' Judge and revenge my cause, O Lord ! ' She could skarse be holdin upon horsebacke for greefe and faintnesse. So soone as she recovered she burst forth in tears, threats, and reproaches as her discontentment moved. All the way she lingered looking for some helpe. She came to Edinburgh about ten houres at night, her face all disfigured with dust and teares. The throng of the people was so thicke that it behoved the armie to marche single man by man." Then followed her imprisonment in Lochleven, and the appointment of Moray as Regent. Her story, so far as Scotland is concerned, may now be soon told. She escaped from the island on May 3, 1568. The battle

John Knox

of Langside was fought on the 13th, and on the 16th she entered England to die on the scaffold at Fotheringay Castle after an imprisonment of nineteen years.

These troubles of the Queen were the opportunity of the Kirk. Darnley sometimes went to hear Knox, and returned one day very indignant because he had quoted a text in the course of his sermon about "children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." The Queen suspended him from preaching, but it came to nothing, and shortly afterwards he went to St. Andrews. It was now that he visited, at the request of the Assembly, certain towns in the south of Scotland. He was commissioned to draw up a form of excommunication and of public repentance, but he also, about this time, composed his *Treatise on Fasting*. In 1566 Mary joined the Catholic League, promoted by the Guises for the extirpation of Protestants, but her influence was

Plea for Puritans

rapidly waning in Scotland. Knox again left Edinburgh after the assassination of Rizzio, having, without being privy to it, expressed his approval of it.¹ He went to England to visit his sons, and took with him a letter written by himself at the command of the General Assembly to the bishops and pastors of the Church. It is a plea for toleration on behalf of the Puritans. "If suirclothes, corner-cap, and tippet," it asks,² "have been the badges of idolaters in the verie act of their idolatry, what hath the preacher of Christian libertie, and open rebooker of all superstition, to doe with the dregges of that Romish beast; yea, what is he that ought not to feare either to tak in his hand, or his forehead, the print and marke of that odious beast? Our brethrein who refuse of conscience that unprofitable apparell doe neither damne nor molest you that use suche

¹ Professor Hume Brown's *Life of Knox*, ii. 310.

² Calderwood's *History*, ii. 333.

John Knox

vaine trifles. If yee sall doe the like to them, we doubt not but therein yee sall please God, and comfort the hearts of manie who are wounded with the extremitie which is used against these godlie and our beloved brethrein.”

Knox was away during the murder of Darnley, and returned about the time that Mary fled with Bothwell to Dunbar. On July 29, 1567, he preached the sermon in Stirling at the Coronation of James VI., and took exception to the ceremony of anointing done by the Bishop of Orkney. He was, like most of the ministers, prepared to try the Queen for murder and adultery, and if she were found guilty to punish her with death.

Moray used his influence to shield her, and was appointed Regent during her imprisonment in Lochleven. The Assembly met almost immediately afterwards (July 25, 1567), and resolved to improve the occasion in the interests of religion. One

The Civil Magistrate

of its findings is worth quoting: "That all kings, princes, and magistrates which heerafter in anie time to come sall happin to raigne and beare rule over this realme, at their first entrie, before they be crowned and inaugurated, sall make their faithful league and promise to the true Kirk, that they sall maintain and defend, and by all lawfull meanes set forward, the true religion of Jesus Christ, presentlie professed and established within the realme, even as they are oblised (obliged) and astricted by the law of God in Deuteronomie and in the second chapter of the First Booke of the Kings, as they crave obedience of their subjects. So the bond and contract to be mutuall and retiproock in all times cumming betwixt the prince and God, and also betwixt the prince and the faithfull people, according to the Word of God."¹ The covenant could hardly have been made more stringent, and this extract is also

¹ Calderwood's *History*, ii. 381.

John Knox

valuable for the light it throws on the attitude of Knox to Scripture.

The Parliament met on December 15, and the Protestant religion was by it first legally established in Scotland, the Queen having refused to confirm the proceedings of 1560. The King now, with the advice of the Regent and the Three Estates, ratified and approved of the Act abolishing Popery. The Reformed Church was declared to be the only true Church within the realm. One cannot, without conformity to it, enjoy any benefice. It alone has jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters, and a committee is appointed to consider the limitations of its authority. The patrons have the right to presentation, but the right of examination for, and admission to, the sacred office pertains to the ministers. The teinds belong to the Church. A coronation oath was framed in which the Scottish kings were bound to support the true religion of

Coronation Oath

Jesus Christ, now received and preached within the realm. "Thay sall forbid and repres," it reads, "in all estaits and degreis, reif oppressioun and all kynde of wrang. In all jugementis they sall command and procure that justice and equitie be keipit in all creatures, without exceptioun, as the Lord and Father of all mercyis be mercifull to thame. And out of their landis and empyre they salbe cairfull to rute out all heretykis and enemies to the trew worschip of God that salbe convict be the trew Kirk of God of the foirsaidis crymis."¹

There was also the inevitable legislation about the thirds. Mr. Taylor Innes in his biography of Knox credits him with a wonderful inspiration in favour of voluntarism. It was utterly alien to his whole conception of things, as this unwearied insistence on the patrimonial rights of the Church abundantly proves, and the

¹ Acts iii. 23.

John Knox

evidence quoted by Mr. Innes really confirms this view. One must, to understand it, refer to the proceedings of the General Assembly held about a year before on December 25, 1566. One of its two meetings, out of contempt for the sacred days of the past, was generally called for Christmas, but it seldom made for peace. On this occasion the ministers had just reason of complaint. Their small stipends were not paid, and they were in extreme poverty. The Queen, with the consent of the Privy Council, proposed to assign them a pension of money and victuals for their sustentation. It seemed very generous ; but, as it was a mere dole out of the third assigned for their support, it partook of the nature of an insult. It was a denial of their rights accompanied with an offer of alms. A conference was held on the subject, and the ministers very wisely agreed to pocket their pride and accept the relief. It was felt, however, that this

Voluntaryism

humiliation was due to the apathy of their congregations in not placing them in possession of the teinds. The Church was, according to the ideas of the Reformers, a national institution, and should not be dependent on the hap-hazard generosity of a Romanist like the Queen, but be able to rely on some national provision secured by the citizens in acknowledgment of spiritual service. "Having just title," they said, "to crave the said bodilie food at the hands of the saids personis, and finding no uthers bound unto them, they only require at their own flock, that they will sustain them according to their bounden dutie, and what it shall please them to give for their sustentation, if it were but bread and water, neither will they refuse it, nor desist from the vocatione. But to take from others contrare their will, whom they serve not, they judge it not their dewtie, nor yet reasonable. . . . Nevertheless," they continue, "the hail

John Knox

Assemblie solemnly protested that the acceptance of the foresaid assignatione for the relief as said is, prejudices not the libertie of the Kirk to sute for that thing that justly pertaineth to the patrimonie of the same, in tyme and place convenient, in any tyme hereafter.”¹

That very day questions were raised in the Assembly about the rights of the Church. It was affirmed without contradiction that the teinds should only be applied in stipends to ministers, the support of the poor, the maintaining of schools, the repairing of churches, “and uthers godly uses at the discretion of the Kirk.” It was their duty not to keep silence on the subject but to “desyre all men to suit for that whilk justly pertaines to the sustaining of the things forsaid.” It must be confessed that it is very difficult from the proceedings of this Assembly to see any sympathy with voluntaryism. The

¹ *Booke of the Universall Kirk of Scotland*, p. 47.

Church and State

Church never seems to have felt a greater need for its patrimony, nor to have been more in earnest to secure it ; but the truth is, voluntarism, implying as it does liberty of worship, was quite foreign to the mind of Knox and his age. The civil magistrate must not only suppress heresy, but maintain the true Church in all its rights and privileges. The position of Knox on this matter is clearly defined in the *Book of Discipline*, and he never departed from it. He was quite content to preach on bread and water, but thought he would preach better with a certain provision for a few luxuries and some leisure.

The Church found a splendid opportunity to assert its rights on this subject under the Regency of Moray, and in this first Parliament, at which the Protestant religion became by law the national religion, it was further enacted :¹ " That the thrids of the whole benefices in time

¹ Calderwood's *History*, ii. 389.

John Knox

comming sall be payed first to the ministers, notwithstanding anie discharge given by the Queene to whatsoever person or persons of the thrids or anie part thereof, ay and whill the Kirk come to the full possessioun of their owne proper patri-monie, which is the tithes : providing the ministers, their collectors, make yeerlie compt in the exchequer of their intromis-sioun, that the superplus may be applied to the King's use." This was, of course, a reversal of the position. The Court had formerly helped itself out of the thirds, and given the balance to the Church. The last was now to be first, and received according to law an immediate possession of the thirds with an ultimate expectation of the whole teind or spirituality of the Church, amounting to one-half of its original wealth. This was never realised. The thirds of all the benefices came to £72,491, with £1389:10s. accruing from small livings afterwards

Earl of Moray

added ; but out of it, according to Principal Cunningham,¹ only £24,231 was assigned to the maintenance of the Reformed Church ; in other words, their share of the whole was ultimately about a ninth.

The work of Knox was now really finished. Moray proved a good friend to the Church and a wise ruler of his country. Much has been written against him. He has been accused of duplicity and selfishness, of sacrificing others to serve his own ambition, and specially of having been false to the Queen. It must often have been difficult for a Protestant noble to win the confidence of Mary, but the Regent certainly protected her from the fury of the mob at her first mass in Scotland, and his influence with the ministers saved her at the end from the doom of a criminal, while, in the opinion of critics like Mr. Lang,² it was owing to

¹ *History of the Church of Scotland*, i. 384.

² *History of Scotland*, ii. 194.

John Knox

his sagacity and fidelity that the country was kept from being thrown by the minions of Elizabeth into the horrors of civil war. He soon found himself with many enemies, and the popish faction was headed by the Hamiltons. They loved to fish in troubled waters, and the coronation of James threatened to bar their succession to the throne. Attempts were made to assassinate the Regent, and he was at last shot (January 23, 1570) by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, a nephew of the Archbishop of St. Andrews, from a window in Linlithgow. There was forthwith a revulsion of feeling in his favour. The Archbishop at the end confessed his complicity in the deed, and of all his crimes it was the only one for which at his execution he expressed his contrition. Knox, on February 14, preached the sermon in St. Giles' before the funeral to a crowd of three thousand on the text, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," and Buchanan wrote his epitaph.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST DAYS OF KNOX

THE country was again in trouble, and Knox in October had a stroke of apoplexy. It affected his speech ; and his enemies, according to the malicious superstition of the time, in which his friends unhappily shared, saw in it a judgment of God. He rallied somewhat, but unfortunately continued henceforth an invalid. His old friend, Kirkaldy of Grange, had, under the influence of Lethington, joined the party of the Queen and held the Castle. They quarrelled bitterly over some remarks made by the preacher. Knox was presumptuous enough to predict the manner of his death. Kirkaldy

John Knox

resented it, and it widened the estrangement. Knox never all the same lost his respect for the old soldier, and in the end thus distinguishes between him and Lethington: "For the an I am sorie that sa sould befall him, yit God assures me ther is mercie for his saul: for that uther I haif na warrand that ever he salbe weill."¹ Feeling ran high between the factions. Knox became the subject of anonymous libels and absurd scandals. He refused to pray for Mary, and his excuse, though creditable, is not Christian. "I am not bound," he said, "to pray for her in this place, for sovereign to me she is not: and I let them understand that I am not a man of law that has my tongue to sell for silver or favour of the world."² He repelled the charge of having been unpatriotic enough to ask troops from Elizabeth to assist his cause by the prophetic words: "What I have been to my country, albeit this un-

¹ Melville's *Diary*, p. 35.

² M'Crie's *Life*, p. 254.

Rise of Episcopacy

thankful age will not know, yet the ages to come will be compelled to bear witness to the truth.”¹ His life was really in danger from the Hamiltons, and one evening a bullet was sent through his room. It was judged prudent for him to leave the city, and on May 5, 1571, he went to St. Andrews. It was while here that the Regent Lennox was killed at Stirling. He was succeeded by the Earl of Mar, who, under the inspiration of Morton, encouraged the idea of the nobles as patrons securing the bishoprics, and then bargaining with poor ministers to discharge the duties for a paltry stipend. James Melville tells of a sermon he heard about this time in St. Andrews, where reference was made to three kinds of bishops: “My lord bischop, my lord’s bischop, and the Lord’s bischop. My lord bischop,” said the preacher, “was in the Papistrie; my lord’s bischope is now, when my lord getts

¹ M'Crie's *Life*, p. 255.

² Melville's *Diary*, p. 32.

John Knox

the benefice, and the bischope serves for na thing bot to mak his tytle sure ; and the Lord's bischope is the trew minister of the Gospell." These poor hirelings sometimes went by the name of *tulchan* bishops from the figure of a calf used to induce the cows to give milk. The Church was naturally dissatisfied with this arrangement, and met at Leith in January 1572 to counteract it. They agreed, under the influence of the nobles, to maintain the old titles and the old dioceses. These were, however, to be held by properly qualified persons, with authority similar to that formerly enjoyed by the superintendents. This conclusion did not commend itself, and an Assembly held at Perth a few months afterwards (August) protested against it as popery. These movements worried Knox. He was indignant at the avarice of the nobility, and for this reason disposed to favour the proposal made at Leith, but cannot in consequence

At St. Andrews

be claimed as in any sense an advocate of Episcopacy. He refused to inaugurate Douglas as Archbishop of St. Andrews, and declared his adhesion to the system set forth in the *Book of Discipline*.

The *Diary* of James Melville, nephew of the more famous Andrew, is our best authority for this period. It is one of the treasures of Reformation literature, and gives a most interesting account of Knox at St. Andrews. "Mr. Knox," he¹ writes, "wald sum tymes com in and repose him in our College Yeard, and call us schollars unto him and bless us, and exhort us to knaw God and His wark in our countrey, and stand by the guid cause, to use our tyme weill, and lern the guid instructions, and follow the guid exemple of our maisters. . . . I hard him teatche the prophecie of Daniel that simmer, and the winter following. I haid my pen and my litle book, and tuk away sic things as I could

¹ Melville's *Diary*, p. 26.

John Knox

comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderat the space of an halff houre ; bot when he enterit to application, he maid me sa to grew¹ and tremble that I could nocht hald a pen to wryt. . . . I saw him everie day of his doctrine," he adds,² "go hulie (softly) and fear, with a furring of martriks (marten) about his neck, a staff in the an hand, and guid godlie Richart Ballanden, his servand, halding upe the uther oxtar, from the Abbay to the parochie Kirk ; and be the said Richart and another servant lifted upe to the pulpit, whar he behovit to lean at his first entrie ; bot or he haid done with his sermont, he was sa active and vigorus that he was lyk to ding that pulpit in blads, and fly out of it."

In July 1572 the factions came to terms, and Mary's supporters left the Castle of Edinburgh. The citizens returned, and

¹ Shudder.

² Melville's *Diary*, p. 33.

Return to Edinburgh

Knox was urged to join them. He left in August, and on the first Sunday after his arrival appeared in St. Giles', but could not be heard. In September news came about the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The soul of the old Huguenot, for he had preached both at Dieppe and Rochelle, was stirred with indignation, and he denounced "that cruel murderer and false traitor the King of France" in the presence of his ambassador. He tried afterwards to address a smaller audience in the Tolbooth, but his last effort was on November 9, when he inducted Mr. Lawson as his colleague and successor. He could scarcely walk home, and was never again on the streets. He lingered to the 24th, and saw several of his friends from day to day. There was no lack of edifying conversation on his death-bed, but it was not forced, and on one occasion he made an effort to sit down at table with Durie of Leith and Alex. Stewart.

John Knox

"He ordered," writes M'Crie,¹ "a hogs-head of wine which was in his cellar to be pierced for them, and, with a hilarity which he delighted to indulge among his friends, desired Stewart to send for some of it as long as it lasted, for he would not tarry until it was all drunk."

His body was interred in the churchyard of St. Giles'. Every noble in the city is said to have joined the funeral procession, and the crowd was immense. There would, according to the *Book of Discipline*, be no service at the grave, but the fitting word was said by the Regent Morton: "There lies he who never feared the face of man."² I shall only add to this tribute the testimony of his secretary, Bannatyne, who writes of him as "the light of Scotland, the comfort of the Church within the same, the mirror of godliness, and pattern and example to all true ministers, in purity of life, soundness

¹ *Life of Knox*, p. 271.

² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

Appreciation

of doctrine, and boldness in reproving of wickedness ; one that cared not the favour of men, how great soever they were.”¹

The Assembly recognised him as “so notable an instrument of God, that his worthie travells may be remembred in his posteritie,” and recommended the magistrate to give his wife, Margaret Stewart, and her three daughters his stipend for the ensuing year (1573) amounting to “500 merks, tuo chalders wheat, six chalders beare, four chalders oats.”²

¹ Quoted from M'Crie's *Life*, p. 279.

² Row's *History*, p. 46.

CHAPTER X

THE CHARACTER AND THE INFLUENCE OF KNOX

THE life of Knox gives splendid opportunity for picturesque narrative and irrelevant criticism. The society of his time was greatly divided over his merits, and it has not been otherwise with posterity. He has been blamed very unjustly and praised very indiscriminately, but the tendency at présent is to a generous appreciation of his person and influence. I am inclined to agree with this estimate. It is not that of Mr. Lang, and one cannot be indifferent to his verdict. "As a Christian," he writes,¹ "Knox's fault was

¹ *History of Scotland*, ii. 247.

Mr. Lang on Knox

to confine his view too much to the fighting parts of Scripture, and to the denunciations of the prophets. The 'sweet reasonableness' of the Gospel was to him less attractive. He laid on men burdens too heavy to be borne, and tried to substitute for sacerdotalism the sway of preachers but dubiously inspired. His horror of political murder was confined to the murders perpetrated by his opponents. His intellect once convinced of certain dogmas remained stereotyped in a narrow mould. How little his theology affected, morally, the leaders of his party, every page in this portion of history tells. He was the greatest force working in the direction of resistance to constituted authority—itself then usually corrupt, but sometimes better than anarchy tempered by political sermons. His efforts in favour of education, and of a proper provision for the clergy and the poor, were too far in advance of his age to be entirely successful. He be-

John Knox

queathed to Scotland a new and terrible war between the Kirk and the State. He was a wonderful force, but the force was rather that of Judaism than of the Gospel." This appears to me a fairly impartial judgment on Knox, but it requires qualification, and taken in detail it compels admiration for him. Most of the faults urged against him arose out of his age. He was cradled in conflict, and naturally sought guidance and inspiration in the Word of God. The Old Testament fell in with his circumstances and temperament, and he made effective use of it. Knox had no politics that he did not identify with religion, and knew no party except that of truth. The political sermon was thus his vital breath, and it often acted like ozone on the spiritual health of the community. He seemed at one time to be alone in a shifting bog of audacious self-seeking and immorality, but he stood like a rock for God and the right, strong and

Carlyle on Knox

true in a timid and vacillating crowd of time-servers and men-pleasers. "He is," writes Carlyle,¹ "an instance to us how a man by sincerity itself becomes heroic: it is the grand gift he has. We find in Knox a good, honest, intellectual talent, no transcendent one: a narrow inconsiderable man as compared with Luther; but in heartfelt instinctive adherence to truth, in sincerity, as we say, he has no superior: nay, one might ask, What equal he has? The heart of him is of the true prophet cast. . . . He resembles more than any of the moderns an old Hebrew prophet. The same inflexibility, intolerance, rigid narrow-looking adherence to God's truth, stern rebuke in the name of God to all that forsake truth: an old Hebrew prophet in the guise of an Edinburgh minister of the sixteenth century. We are to take him for that; not require him to be other."

¹ *Hero Worship*, Lect. iv.

John Knox

There is, however, another aspect of Knox that must be placed alongside of this austere portrait of Carlyle, and I give it in the words of Henley. He finds in him a certain spiritual kinship to Burns. "He was," we are reminded,¹ "the man of a crisis, and a desperate one; and he played his part in it like the stark and fearless opposite that he was. But he was a humourist, he loved his glass of wine, he abounded in humanity and intelligence, he married two wives, he was as well beloved as he was extremely hated and feared. He could not foresee what the collective stupidity of posterity would make of his teaching and example, nor how the theocracy, at whose establishment he aimed, would presently assert itself as largely a system of parochial inquisitions. The minister's man who had looked through *his* key-hole would have got short shrift from *him*; and in the eighteenth century

¹ Reprint from *The Centenary Burns*, p. 236.

Henley on Knox

he had as certainly stood with Burns against the Kirk of Scotland, as represented by Auld and Russell and the like, as in the sixteenth he stood with Moray and the nobles against the Church of Rome, as figured in David Beaton and the 'twa infernall monstrie pride and avarice.'"

I am afraid this opinion must be received with qualification. There is a formal and an austere strain in the character of Knox utterly foreign to the temperament of Burns. It is very doubtful if the Reformer would have understood the poet, and not at all doubtful that he would have sympathised with "Daddy Auld" in censuring his conduct. The estimate of Carlyle is in the main correct about the intellect and character of Knox. He was narrow and intense. "In his mental attitude," writes Prof. Hume Brown,¹ "no less than in his modes of thought, Knox

¹ *Life of Knox*, ii. 116.

John Knox

was in reality in the same plane as his old master, the schoolman, John Major. When Knox had extracted his theological system from the Bible, and held it in his hand embodied in an elaborate Confession of Faith, his labour as a thinking agent was at an end. To add to this compendium or take from it was alike an impiety which deserved due penalties in this world, and would certainly ensure them in the next. By these paper-popes, as Confessions were sarcastically called, the Protestants were thus as rigidly bound to the same mental attitude as the schoolman who had to regulate his thinking by the decisions of popes and councils. . . . By the ingenious combination, of texts," he adds, "divorced from their natural meaning, he arrived at a system of dogma which, to a large extent, would have been unrecognisable by any writer either in the Old or in the New Testament." (In point of insight and intelligence

Limitations of Knox

Knox did not stand in the front rank of his time. He was too formal and conventional to sympathise with the Anabaptists. It is true that they had largely brought discredit upon themselves by their extravagance, but they had a great deal to give the world in their doctrine of the Spirit that Knox might have taken to heart with profit to himself. He makes a feeble defence against the critics of Calvinism in his treatise on Predestination. The quotations from the enemy might have educated himself, and one feels that in rejecting their arguments he as truly sinned against light as the poor Queen did in cleaving to Romanism. It has become customary, in fact, for many in our Churches to glory in the limitations of Knox. One now invokes his authority in favour of the infallibility of Scripture. It was just this very belief, however, that impaired his influence and left a heritage of mischief to his country. The misfor-

John Knox

tune and the glory of Knox was to appeal in all circumstances to the Word of God, and he did so without discrimination, seeing the same inspiration in the Book of Deuteronomy as in the Sermon on the Mount, though the one insisted on a policy diametrically opposed to that of the other. It has been said that Knox was intolerant. He did not think so, and he was right. When George Hay was called to argue with him on a question of public importance, he warned him not to waste their time in dialectic unless he really differed from him, but he said, "gif conscience move you to oppose your self to that doctrine, whilk ye have heard of my mouth in that maitter, do it bauldlie : it sall nevir offend me."¹ He went to a discussion as bravely as one did to a duel, determined, if he proved blasphemy, to insist on death, but also willing to suffer it. Again and again he blames himself for his

¹ Knox's *Works*, ii. 434.

Deuteronomy

want of fidelity to principle in yielding to the nobles for the sake of the Queen. There is nothing specially intolerant about the nature of Knox, but intolerance is involved in this theory of Scripture. He condemned the mass by a syllogism. All idolatry, we read in Deuteronomy, deserves death ; the mass is idolatry, and therefore, argued Knox, one cannot, without disobedience to God, refrain from imposing this penalty. Here again, however, he was much more merciful than the authority invoked by him to vindicate his position. "The Word of God," he writes,¹ "whilk pronounceth deith perpetuall to idolateris is irrevocabill, and cannot be fals." "The Lord commandit the haill citie of Jerecho to be distroyit, and na part of the substance of the sam to be reservit ; whilk sentence he also pronouncit aganis everie citie that sall revolt from God bak to idolatrie."² He quotes from Deut. xiii. 6-11 : "If thy

¹ Knox's *Works*, iv. 242.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 233.

John Knox

brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers. . . . Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him ; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him : but thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.” That injunction would, of course, only apply to perverts from Protestantism, but something far worse was denounced in Deuteronomy against the idolaters born in the land, and these were to be identified with people like the Queen, who had been cradled in Romanism. In an address sent in 1559 to the “pestilent prelates and thare schavillingis,” he writes :¹ “Yea, we shall begyn that same

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 336.

Intolerance of Knox

warre whiche God commanded Israell to execut aganis the Cananites." They felt bound to do so, and the lords, in a covenant made at Perth (1559), swore "to concur and assist together in doing all thingis required by God in his Scripture."¹ It was a frightful oath for good men to take, and happily for themselves they never kept it. There was confusion and violence enough in the land, but rigid obedience to the precepts of Deuteronomy would have meant not only sending a few Papists to the scaffold, but a war of extermination. The Israelites were expressly commanded to root out the Canaanites and to "save alive nothing that breatheth." Knox was therefore not by nature intolerant, but he had accepted a view of Scripture that consecrated intolerance, and much to his regret often confessed himself kinder than his creed. There are many who criticise the conduct of the

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 344.

John Knox

Reformer and yet profess to find in these precepts of Deuteronomy a law of life. They are very eloquent about the infallibility of Scripture, but they do not seem to understand its precepts so well as Knox did, and are not much in earnest about the realisation even of the simplest. One pities the Reformer trammelled with such superstitions about Scripture, and compelled to fight for liberty with such perverted ideas of history and humanity. What misery and mischief might have been spared to himself and to posterity if he had realised that there is an evolution in religion as in everything else, seen conspicuously in the teaching of the Gospels as compared with that of Deuteronomy, and therefore allowing people of different creeds to meet together with mutual respect and live together in fraternal relations! This breadth of view belonged to neither Knox nor his age. "Vane," he writes,¹

¹ Knox's *Works*, iv. 232.

True or False

“be all the cogitationis of men, sa soone as thay in the leist a jot declyne fra Godis Word. In religioun thair is na middis : either it is the religioun of God, and that in everie thing that is done it must have the assurance of his awn Word, and than is his Majestie trewlie honouret, or else it is the religioun of the Divill, whilk is, when men will erect and set up to God sic religioun as pleaseth thame.” It was not, of course, possible with such convictions to escape confusion and conflict. It is easy for us to realise their absurdity, but they were held by the best men on both sides for generations, and are still professed by absolute religions like Romanism. As Tennyson reminds us—

“Through the ages an increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process
of the suns.”

We have even in this matter much to learn from Knox. The Word of God is a reality, however we may be mistaken in our

John Knox

interpretation of Scripture, and it can be identified with nothing but truth. Let us be as earnest as Knox was to find it, and as faithful in our endeavours to realise it. We are for this reason mainly indebted to him for our emancipation from his own superstitions. It is the study of Scripture that has enabled us to attain sounder ideas about the authority of Scripture, and to rejoice in the supremacy of love.

Knox, however, was rather a statesman than an expositor. The Church to him meant the Kingdom of God, and it was to be commensurate with the nation. Its head was Christ, and He was King over all the rulers of the world. "Then," he writes,¹ "it becumeth the Kirk of Jesus Christ to advert what He speiketh, to receave and imbrace His lawis, and whair He maketh end of speiking or law giving here to rest : so that all the power of the Kirk is subject to Godis Word." We

¹ Knox's *Works*, iii. 41.

The Church Supreme

have here the source and spring of the ideals and actions of Knox. It is little to say that he believed in spiritual independence in the sense of co-ordinate jurisdiction. He would have scouted the proposal to have a free Church in a free State. The Church to him absorbed the State, while rulers and ministers were equally servants of God and bound in their conduct to conform to the divine precepts. It is preposterous to associate him with voluntarism, for one could not remain indifferent to the Kingdom of God, and no toleration could be shown to an alien. "If Mary (referring to the Queen of England) and her counsellors," he once wrote¹ with more than his usual vigour, "had been sent to hell before these dayes, her cruelty should not have so manifestly appeared to the world." "I fear not to affirm," he writes² in another place, "that it had bene the dutie of the

¹ Knox's *Works*, iv. 47.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 507.

John Knox

nobilitie, judges, rulers, and people of England, not only to have resisted and again standed Marie, that Jesabel, whome they call their Queen, but also to have punished her to the death, with all the sort of her idolatrous preastes, together with all such as should have assisted her, what tyme that shee and they openly began to suppressse Christe's Evangil, to shed the blood of the saincts of God, and to erect that most divellish idolatrie, the Papisticall abominatiouns and his usurped tyrannie which once most justly by commune othe was banished from that realme." "We say," to quote another passage in another connection,¹ "the man is not persecuted for his conscience, that, declining from God, blaspheming His Majestie, and contemning His religion, obstinately defendeth erroneous and fals doctrine. This man, I say, lawfully convicted, if he suffer the death pronounced by a lawful magistrate, is

¹ Knox's *Works*, v. 231.

The Only Rule

not persecuted (as in the name of Servetus ye furiously complein), but he suffereth punishment according to God's commandement, pronounced in Deuteronomy the XIII chapter." One has no difficulty in seeing the position of Knox. Every country must be under the government of God, and the evidence of this is to be found in conformity to His Word. There can be no divine right of kings as there can be no divine right of priests. The Bible is open, and every one must judge it for himself and be judged by it.¹ Knox did not, of course, like the Anabaptists, pulverise the institutions of society. He believed strongly in authority, but entirely in God, and would not have hesitated to overthrow every authority in opposition to the injunctions of Scripture. He had no scruples about rebellion, but looked on it as a religious duty. He would not

¹ This implies toleration, but it was not recognised. The truth was determined by the interpretation of the Church.

John Knox

only have banished Mary, but would for her sins have beheaded her. It is sometimes said that he was a republican. I am afraid that he was too much in earnest about the attitude of government to care much about its form. He had little respect for the rulers of his age, but in ordinary circumstances was prepared to treat them with due deference, even though they were women. It was, according to him,¹ difficult for a godly man "to bruke office or authoritie under thame, but in so doing he salbe compellit, not only aganis equitie and justice to oppress the pure, but also expressedlie to fight aganis God and His ordinance, either in maintenance of idolatrie or ellis in persecuting Godis chosen childrene. And what must follow heirof, but that aither Princeis be reformit, and be compellit also to reforme thair wickit lawis, or els that all gud men depart fra thair service and company." It would

¹ Knox's *Works*, iv. 327.

A Theocracy

be easy, but it is happily needless to multiply passages on this subject. Knox meant to establish a theocracy in Scotland, but he was, with all his enthusiasm, fairly practical, and saw the propriety of respecting constituted authority. It could not be otherwise. He believed in having the Church endowed by teinds, in constraining every citizen to join it, and in securing obedience to its teaching and injunctions. The question of priority between Church and State could hardly, in these circumstances, emerge; but it did, because the ideal of Knox was not realised. It stood for God, and was therefore from everlasting to everlasting with all authority under its feet. The Parliament ratified the *Confession of Faith* and refused to ratify the *Book of Discipline*. It made, of course, a practical difference to the Church, but it in no way affected its claims. The Church, so far from being the creation of the State, is a divine institution for the

John Knox

instruction and guidance of States. It must not allow itself to be coerced by them, and Knox always contended for the complete independence of the Church in spiritual matters. He would certainly have claimed the right to formulate its creed as well as to administer its affairs, and constantly tended to encroach on the province of the State; while the State, on the other hand, endeavoured to restrict the legitimate authority of the Church. Little was done to "redd the marches" during the lifetime of Knox. He felt himself sadly hampered by the action of Parliament, and men like Lethington scoffed at his ideas; but there can be no doubt that he meant the Church to be the soul of the State, giving of her spiritual things and receiving in return temporal things, while both were to work in harmony to further the Kingdom of God upon earth. The idea was excellent, but its realisation might not have been so

Clerical Tyranny

excellent. The country under a theocracy like that conceived of by Knox would not have had reason to rejoice in its liberty. It is with a certain amount of truth that one identifies the struggles of the Reformers with the cause of freedom. On their negative side they were so. They overthrew the divine right of the Papacy, and then proceeded to attack the divine right of the monarchy. In doing so they did an immense service to society ; but all this work was done with a very indifferent idea of individual liberty.

The Church under Knox threatened to become a tyranny, but under lesser men in various parishes it became an inquisition, and here Burns proved himself to be as true a Reformer as Knox. Prof. Hume Brown has written of him as a schoolman in his thinking ; he was also something of a Romanist in his ecclesiasticism. His theocracy was in practice a government by preachers in General Assembly instead

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of by cardinals in conclaves. It was more democratic and it conferred with an open Bible, but its claim for authority was out of all proportion to its wisdom. It was for the good of the world that there was opposition in the person of Lethington to represent the rights of the State. He did it badly, for his hands were not clean nor his heart pure, and he had lifted up his soul to vanity as well as sworn deceitfully, but all the same he did it. In spite of his cleverness, however, he was essentially a poor creature, and only magnified by his miserable intrigues and melancholy ending the sterling character of the great Reformer. It was a misfortune to Scotland that her nobles were so avaricious and unscrupulous as not to be able to furnish a creditable statesman among them. The ideas of Knox duly tempered and modified by criticism and charity would have proved the salvation of the country, but the men who undertook the task were as a rule unfit

Factions

for it, and this blundering meant at least a century of misery to Scotland. Statesmen might with reason have protested against a Jewish constitution being forced on the country by ignorant and arrogant ecclesiastics, but they often exerted themselves in favour of something worse, such as a truckling to despotism under the plea of the divine right of kings, and a return to superstition under the leadership of Laud. In 1690 Presbyterianism became the national religion of Scotland. The King was tolerant, and wished for State and other reasons to make it comprehensive ; but the Church would have none of it, and bound itself by a strict formula to all the tenets of Calvinistic theology. From a desire to exclude latitudinarians it deprived itself of liberty to adjust its creed to the intelligence of the age, and thus turned the dagger to its breast. To its credit, however, it endeavoured to exercise this right, and one of the objections to Modera-

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tism by the Seceders was that it tolerated Arminians like Simson as ministers in the Church. The Evangelicals continued the traditions of the Seceders. They were strongly in favour of a Calvinistic theology and an infallible Bible, but they found patronage so irksome that they, in the form of the Veto Act, undertook legislation on their own account against it, and thus broke their compact with the State. They were naturally dissatisfied with the constitution of the Established Church as the law then declared it, but still, like Knox, they believed in the union of Church and State, while they never hesitated in connection with such matters as Sabbath observance and the teaching of catechisms to impose on the whole community their peculiar ideas about the authority of Scripture. There has thus in Scotland been much confused thinking and inconsistent acting on this subject. Many sought an escape from it in Voluntarism. This is the solution of Liberalism,

Voluntaryism

and so far one can respect it, but it is not satisfactory and cannot therefore be permanent, though any subsequent system must give effect to its legitimate protest against coercive measures. So long as man is a social being religion can never be a private affair. We have certainly no right to interfere with liberty of discussion, far less to enforce our superstitions upon others, but our duty to God cannot be confined to ourselves, or even to our chapels and churches. His will must be known and done on the earth. We cannot meet to talk about it and refrain from doing it, and we cannot do it as individuals without doing it as citizens. It has been said, and I think with truth, that living Churches tend to resolve themselves more and more into active agencies for promoting the Kingdom of God. The idea of individual salvation peculiar to Evangelicalism has gone. We are bound together in the bundle of life, and can neither secure our

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welfare nor realise our duty apart from others. The Church has always to some extent ministered to the material as well as to the spiritual necessities of the people, but our charities, mainly owing to ecclesiastical disorganisation, are coming more under municipal and national control, with the result of identifying religion with politics. The foundations of Voluntaryism crack under the increasing weight of moral and social responsibility. Religion can accept no limitations, and thus by a wide sweep we come back to the position of Knox. We have only to associate the Word of God with the cause of truth, and the Kingdom of God with the welfare of humanity, to feel in perfect sympathy with his ideals. As Carlyle puts it :¹ "If we think his scheme of truth was too narrow, was not true, we may rejoice that he could not realise it; that it remained after two centuries of effort unrealisable, and is a

¹ *Hero Worship*, Lect. iv.

The Kingdom of God

‘devout imagination’ still. But how shall we blame *him* for struggling to realise it? Theocracy, government of God, is precisely the thing to be struggled for: All Prophets, zealous Priests, are there, for that purpose. Hildebrand wished a Theocracy: Cromwell wished it, fought for it: Mahomet attained it. Nay, is it not what all zealous men, whether called Priests, Prophets, or whatsoever else called, do essentially wish, and must wish? That Right and Truth, or God’s Law reign supreme among men, this is the Heavenly Ideal (well named in Knox’s time, and namable in all times, a revealed ‘Will of God’) towards which the Reformer will insist that all be more and more approximated. All true Reformers, as I said, are by nature of them Priests, and strive for a Theocracy.”

There are a few things about Knox I will not profess to admire. I am not sure, however, that one is justified in referring to them, and the only excuse one can offer for

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doing so is that they are sometimes looked upon as meritorious in him. The most of them belong to his age, and the rest of them may be covered by the wise remark that we have all the defects of our qualities. There are no perfect men among our great men, but they are still to be met with, I believe, in refined coteries and select conventicles, institutions not much heard of for either good or ill in the outward world. Knox writes in the abusive style of his period, almost justifying the remark made by Froude, that God was the author of religion but the Devil invented theology. It is little to confess that he has none of the graces of a courtier ; he is worse than rude, he is tactless. I do not see much to complain of in his discussions with Mary, but his correspondence with Elizabeth and Cecil at a critical period for himself and his country is pitifully absurd, while he was charged with having greatly embittered the Romish

The Failings of Knox

persecution in England by his violent pamphlets against the Queen and her husband, Philip of Spain. There is also his faith in portents and his gift of prophecy. A comet appears and dreadful results follow. He is shocked at the indifference of the Queen Regent to a calf with two heads, but the war began shortly after.¹ The wrath of Heaven was clearly revealed against the dancing at Holyrood, for in January fell "weit in grit abundance"² that turned immediately to ice. Many fowls died, and some had to be revived before the fire. The sea stood still and there was neither ebb nor flow during twenty-four hours. In February "wes sene in the fymament battelis arrayit, speiris, and uther weapounis, and as it had bene the joinyng of two armies." These portents were affirmed by men of judgment and credit, but the Queen evidently laughed at them and went on with her banqueting.

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 254.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 417.

John Knox

Knox is too prone to see in the calamities of others the judgments of Heaven, but he is also arrogant enough to predict them. The Queen Regent was specially favoured by him, and he does not hesitate thus to write about her in his History¹:—"As concernyng the threatnyngis pronounced against hir awin persone, and the most principall of hir freindis, lett thare verray flatteraris see what hath failed of all that he has written." He warned Kirkaldy, that if he did not leave the evil cause and surrender the Castle he would be brought down over its wall and hang against the sun. It all came true to the letter. Predictions that are known have a tendency to fulfil themselves. Knox is not, of course, the only preacher in Scotland who has claimed that gift. We have ceased, however, to take such pretensions seriously, and now see in them merely the innocent vanity of a superstitious age.

¹ Knox's *Works*, i. 252.

“History of the Reformation”

We must apologise for Knox that not content with being a prophet he would aspire to be also a soothsayer.

It is difficult to read his polemical writings, and they do not repay the trouble, but his History is a work of genius. His account of the murder of Cardinal Beaton is, in Henley's opinion, Shakespearean, but the whole book is eminently readable. The period lives before you in its picturesque incidents and animated controversies, while over all is the radiant humour of a kindly soul, and not seldom the scorching flash of a malicious wit. One cannot excuse the innuendoes and scandals heaped upon his adversaries. Knox had, unfortunately, not merely the defects of his qualities, but he also sometimes succumbed to the temptations of his position and left the furnace of conflict singed by the fires of hate. One would have liked a larger charity and a wider outlook. We seem far away from the

John Knox

beatitudes of Jesus, or even the tenderness of the prophets, but we might here easily be very unjust to the Reformer. He figures mainly as a fighter, but we must not forget that he could also enter into the sorrows of women, and won not only their respect but their confidence, while he was both admired and beloved in the intimate circle of his friends and family. He certainly came in the hour of need to the help of the Lord against the mighty, and proved himself qualified in an eminent degree for the fierce work of a momentous struggle. In an age of corruption he stood for honesty, amid a host of waverers he kept his fidelity, and by sheer force of genuine sincerity made himself a power in the land. "I assure you," writes Randolph to Cecil,¹ "the voice of one man is able in an hour to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears." He was no sounding brass

¹ M'Crie's *Life of Knox*, p. 183.

Integrity and Courage

nor tinkling cymbal. As he thought he spoke, and would not sacrifice the cause of religion either to the tears of a queen or the frowns of a noble. One cannot exaggerate his influence over either his contemporaries or posterity. He strengthened the feeble knees and made straight paths for the common people. The lie faltered at his look, vice trembled in his presence. The hammer may have been lifted up against the carved work of superstitious worship, but he taught us the beauty of holiness, and helped us to the dignity of manhood. He came preaching liberty to the captive, and reminded us that only righteousness can exalt a nation, while he strove through purity and integrity, intelligence and devotion, to make us all kings and priests unto God the Father. His greatest legacy to Scotland is perhaps his example of fearless fidelity in the discharge of public duty. It is absurd to associate him with the errors and limitations of his time. We

John Knox

must consider his spirit and remember his attitude. The law of man had to yield with him to the truth of God, and no social conventions barred the way against moral principles. He stood like Mahomet before the idols of Mecca, and smashed them without pity because they were symbols of falsehood. One may fitly apply to Knox the verses of Whittier on the Reformer :—

All grim and soiled and brown with tan,
I saw a Strong One, in his wrath,
Smiting the godless shrines of man
Along his path.

The Church beneath her trembling dome
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm :
Wealth shook within his gilded home
With strange alarm.

Fraud from his secret chambers fled
Before the sunlight bursting in :
Sloth drew her pillow o'er her head
To drown the din.

“ Spare,” Art implored, “ yon holy pile ;
That grand, old, time-worn turret spare ” ;
Meek Reverence, kneeling in the aisle,
Cried out “ Forbear ! ”

The Reformer

Grey-bearded Use, who, deaf and blind,
Groped for his old accustomed stone,
Leaned on his staff, and wept to find
His seat o'erthrown.

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,
O'erhung with paly locks of gold,—
“Why smite,” he asked in sad surprise,
“The fair, the old?”

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam :
Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,
As from a dream.

I looked : aside the dust-cloud rolled,—
The Waster seemed the Builder too :
Upspringing from the ruined Old
I saw the New.

'Twas but the ruin of the bad,—
The wasting of the wrong and ill :
Whate'er of good the old time had
Was living still.

The grain grew green on battle-plains,
O'er swarded war-mounds grazed the cow :
The slave stood forging from his chains
The spade and plough.

Where frowned the fort, pavilions gay
And cottage windows, flower-entwined,
Looked out upon the peaceful bay
And hills behind.

John Knox

Through prison walls, like heaven-sent hope,
Fresh breezes blew, and sunbeams strayed,
And with the idle gallows rope
The young child played.

Grown wiser for the lesson ~~given~~,
I fear no longer, for I know,
That where the share is deepest driven,
The best fruits grow.

The outworn rite, the old abuse,
The pious fraud transparent grown,
The good held captive in the use
Of wrong alone,—

These wait their doom, from that great law
Which makes a past time serve to-day :
And fresher life the world shall draw
From their decay.

Take heart !—the Waster builds again,—
A charmed life old Goodness hath ;
The tares may perish,—but the grain
Is not for death.

THE END

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